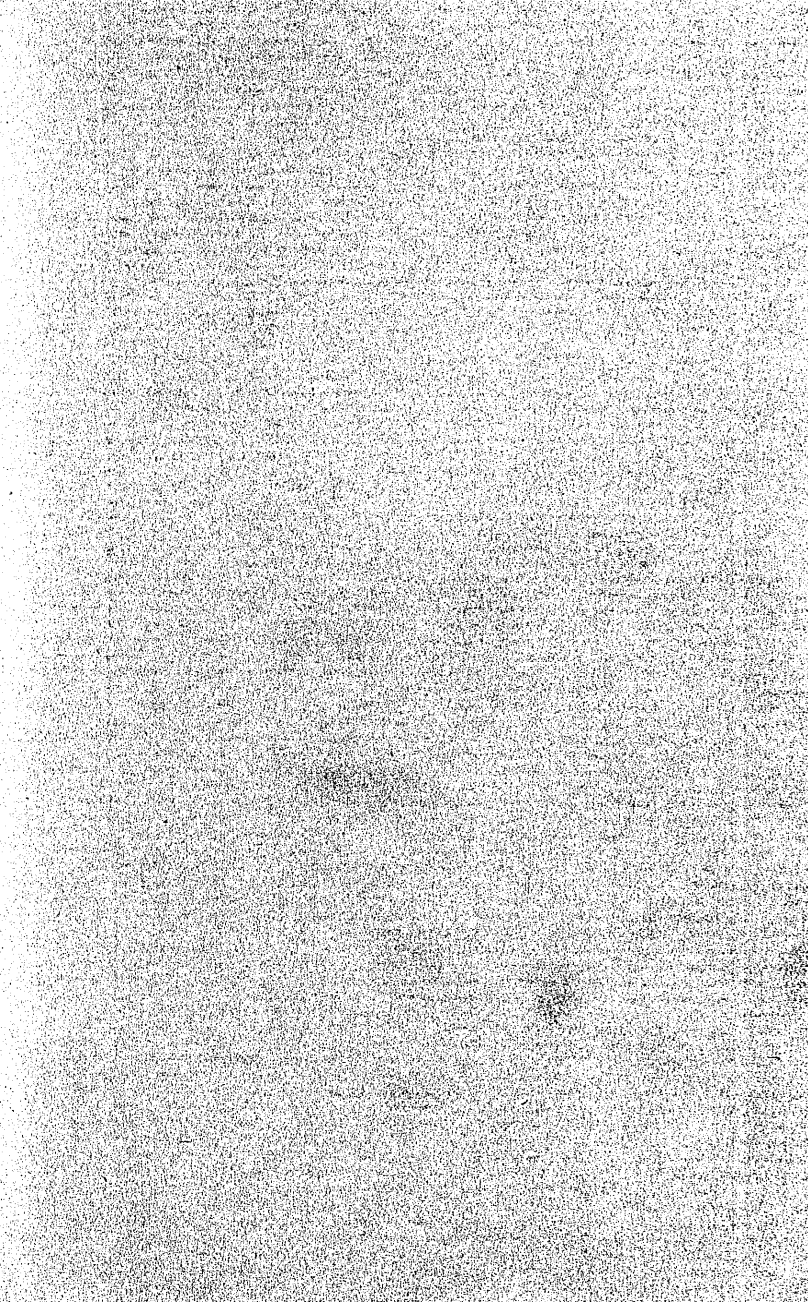


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THE BASIC BELIEFS OF JESUS

By

PAUL B. KERN





THE BASIC BELIEFS OF JESUS

A Study of the Assumptions
Behind a Life

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ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE
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American Institute of Sacred Literature

COKESBURY PRESS, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



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TO

L. C. K.

COMRADE OF THE YEARS

JOY OF MY HEART

FOREWORD

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW said recently in one of his brilliant essays, "What a man believes may be ascertained not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts." Behind the deed there is the intent, and the intent rests upon the philosophy of life that creates and environs it. Out of this reservoir of things most surely believed there flows the outward act and attitude which are real because they are part of an unseen and greater reality that lies hidden in the center of our beings.

The following chapters are an effort to study the basic assumptions upon which the words and deeds of Jesus rest. He was no philosopher presenting to us a well-ordered system of thought. He was no moralist espousing an all-embracing and final code of ethics. He was no religionist interested in founding a new and universal religion for mankind. His contribution was a Life. In the simple, easily discernible

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lines of that earthly career we may discover the last word of reality for which our confused generation seeks. What did Jesus believe? You must find the answer not in any formal creed but in the life behind the creed. Just as the limitless reservoir hidden in the mountains makes possible the trickling stream of living water in the desert, so behind the wayside word and the daily deed of Jesus there is, in the center of his being, a deep Source of Knowledge. Out of this intuitively and unfailingly he speaks to men. These are the fundamental presuppositions, the basic assumptions which condition his universe and determine the range and quality of his ideas and the force and power of his deeds. To pierce behind the word and deed to the creative ideal and pattern of thought and life out of which they came is the road we are here to follow.

William Butler Yeats once in a very suggestive and poetical phrase described genius as "the art of living with the major issues of life." Surely in this respect Jesus is unique. There is about him the imperious majesty that surrounds the ultimate. Being at the center of reality, he is found to be at the center of life. Hence the study leads us into the practical issues of everyday life and Jesus becomes the pioneer and the guide to lead our confused generation into security and to reveal the light on the path ahead.

The abiding influence of Jesus rests upon this iden-

FOREWORD

tity of his mind with the centers of enduring truth. He offers to bewildered men and women no patent, surface solution of their problems. When, however, we have rightly appreciated the fundamental harmonies which prevail in the center of his personality we are led to seek them as a basis of our own better selves. The timelessness of Jesus' approach to life makes his way the path that stretches alluringly and challengingly before each generation. And our generation needs peculiarly to be delivered from the temporary and the expedient and to be thrust again into the central stream of abiding, ageless realities.

I have had great joy in renewing my fellowships on the campus of my Alma Mater and am deeply appreciative of the marked courtesies shown me by the faculty of Vanderbilt University at the time of the delivery of the lectures. My thanks are also due to my brother, Dr. A. A. Kern, head of the English Department of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, for invaluable literary criticism, and to my daughter, Virginia Kern, for secretarial work on the manuscript.

PAUL B. KERN

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**PERSONALITY AND A PERSONAL
UNIVERSE**



Personality and a Personal Universe

IN the closing days of the past year a new star appeared in the sky. Fifteen hundred years ago, just about the time of the downfall of the Roman Empire, a tremendous stellar explosion took place somewhere in the heavenly spaces. The violent, brilliant illumination from the bursting star started toward our earth at the rate of 186,000 light miles per second. It had just arrived. The heavenly visitor found awaiting it a strange scientific instrument called a telescope by which the reach of the human eye is extended to unbelievable distances. But Nova Herculis found awaiting it something more astounding than a scientific instrument. It found a young amateur astronomer in Columbia, South Carolina, who could discover it, classify it, and chart its meteoric flight out of darkness into light and back again into stellar night.

The remarkable fact about this phenomenon of nature is not the long lurid trail of a dying star. It

is the flaming mind of an adolescent boy that can comprehend it. The meteor moves mechanically; the mind moves volitionally. The star must keep the orbit of its centrifugal destiny; but the human brain is free to understand its origin, can prophesy its course, and write its obituary. Man holds the only intelligible and worthy key to the meaning of the universe. "Into whatever realm of thought we stray, we find the universe spelling out one word as its final meaning. It exists for persons."

The contribution of religion to human thought has been the clarification and application of this truth. This reorganizing conception of life is interpreted to us principally by the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. Here is a Galilean carpenter obsessed with a Great Idea. It was the idea that human life was sacred; that it was God's will that every human being should have an abundant life. He drew before the eyes of a group of fishermen the picture of a Kingdom of God in which there should be no slavery, no oppression, no race prejudice, but everywhere peace, justice, and good will. The fishermen listened and finally committed their lives to following this prophet and his Great Idea. They also began to preach that personality was sacred and that God was against all systems that injured it. It was foolishness to the Graeco-Roman world. They laughed in ridicule at the dreaming fishermen. But the Idea grew. It threatened Rome's domination; persecutions followed.

The men whom a dream had possessed worked on. The Empire of Rome broke asunder and collapsed. On through the centuries that Idea has come. It has in it the dynamic of a new order in which human life shall be sacred and personality shall be supreme.

I

No great idea stands alone. It has its roots in the cosmic structure. Such a central purpose in the universe must have its source in the Ultimate Reality that is behind all things. It cannot be an accident or an incident in an ordered world. It must grow out of the nature of the Creating Will. In attempting to find our way back to the originating Cause of an enlightened, purposeful world order, we find ourselves confronted with this prophet of Galilee. He arrests and demands our interest and finally challenges our moral judgment. Because in him men thought they beheld God he has become the most interesting and compelling single human individual in history. We will not let him die because in him we find something that is deathless. However we may explain his origin, his nature, or his self-consciousness, we become persuaded that he knew God as no other man has ever known him, that his personality was so completely integrated and victorious that he becomes an alluring Ideal as we journey on the highroad toward the divine will. In a peculiar and unique fashion the beauty, the love, the

holiness of the Almighty dwelt in him in a fulness never discovered in any human personality before or since. If this be true, it becomes the central and revealing fact in any study of the spiritual history of mankind.

While inquiry into the nature of this divine-human personality must await a later discussion, this one fact may as well be taken for granted: men have seen in Jesus the best portraiture of God which up to this time has been revealed to our human intelligence. He may have much yet to say unto us which we cannot now comprehend, but the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has shone in this One Face which only "disappears to reappear." The nearest approach to the heart of the Infinite Reality which we call God is to be found in a person the authenticity of whose historical existence is just as substantially confirmed as that of Julius Caesar. In fact, we know more about Jesus of Nazareth than we do of any man who belongs to the relatively distant past. His position as an historical figure can no longer be disputed. But his significance is confined almost solely to the contribution which he made to the discovery and understanding of God. Here he is unique and solitary. He was no scientist, no political statesman, no economist or social reformer. He was a personality consciously having his whole being in God and radiating through the avenues of his words, deeds, and inner attitudes the nature of God. This revelation was so

satisfying that in every century since he lived men have turned to him when they would turn their wistful faces toward the higher life. They have believed that when he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he spoke words that are verifiable and absolutely trustworthy.

This historic manifestation of God in human flesh and spirit has many significant imports for truth and life. For the present we are concerned with only one, namely, its bearing on the nature of God as personal. If God was in Jesus, then there must be some common denominator between the self-revealing God and that luminous individual upon whom the Spirit of the Lord descended and rested in such uncommon glory. And that common bond of unity lies in the realm of personality. Jesus is a person. God is a person. They touch each other at that highest point of their separate but common natures. In the person of Jesus we are led to behold "the image of the invisible God."

Let us look at this truth from another angle. I pick up a poem written by that great bard of early English verse, Caedmon. His words and idioms are quite unlike those with which I am familiar, but I can hear him sing:

"Most right it is to chant the ceaseless praise
Of Him who guards the starry heights of blue
And even, with enraptured hearts, adore
The Glory King of Heaven's Angelic host."

I know that over the intervening centuries and in spite of the defective medium of a humanly contrived device we call the alphabet, I can still catch something of the mind and soul of that pioneer of English letters. We are kin, else I could never understand what was in his mind, and it is because we are brothers in the ageless and mysterious bond of truth that he can speak to me and I can know that he has spoken. In like fashion through the medium of the personality of Jesus God becomes incarnate in human life, touching it at its highest reach and revealing himself in him who was the mirror and the revelation of the unseen God. Jesus is the alphabet that spells out God. "The Word became flesh."

Maude Royden has said: "To refuse to think of God in terms which we can understand is to refuse to think of him at all. It is in fact atheism. . . . I believe that there is personality in God. If there is not, then either he does not exist or he does not exist for me." Personality thus becomes the all-revealing as well as the all-inclusive attribute of God. It explains why God understands us and how we dimly approach the knowledge of him. A personal God could be at home only in a personal universe. If creation is the inevitable outflow of his nature, then that which he creates will have kinship with his own self and creation at its topmost levels will reflect the essential characteristics of the Creator. Tirelessly the great Architect has striven to bring to perfection

his own image in humanity, and he will not grow weary or turn aside until all the children of men are the children of God.

When we speak of God as a person we must hasten to voice a caution. Our human categories of personality cannot contain him. While he must have the attributes of personality, such as consciousness, thought, and feeling, he knows no such finite limitations as constrict the human spirit. He is not merely "a large policeman or an overwhelming clergyman." He is personality, but more than personality. "God then is the superpersonal and infinitely creative Spirit of the Cosmos—at once transcendent of, as he is imminent in, all that is finite." We know him because he is like unto us; we cannot fully know him because he so far transcends us in the unfathomable out-reaches of divine personality.

The universe exists for personal ends. No other worthy goal or motif has been discovered. Even the scientific materialist concedes that "the personality-producing forces within the universe (are) the most valuable and respectable of all known cosmic forces." There is no other key to the scheme of things than man. His ultimate arrival at perfection, individually and socially, is the moving purpose of the universe. For this goal nature herself is in travail, waiting for "the manifestation of the sons of God." The long climb up the calvaries of the ages has been to set men free, to give them security, joy, and a sense of honor

and value. Men have gone to the stake to lift the pall of ignorance from the human mind; they have been excommunicated and socially pilloried in an effort to set free the human spirit.

God himself is a partner in this purpose. To bring "many sons to glory" has been his passion since the foundation of the world. For this did he create a natural order which is both the friend and the chastener of man; for this did he ordain freedom with its consequences of sin and forgiveness; for this came the law of Moses and the rebuke of the prophets; for this did he finally reveal his father-heart in Jesus, and for this did that heart break on Calvary. All creation costs; all goals are expensive in blood and frustration. But the goal is worthy of the price. Mankind must be brought to perfection and god-likeness.

Jesus assumed the existence of God. He never sought to prove it. He furthermore assumed that God was a Person, and again he undertook no proof. The idea to him was so native, so transparently true that it never occurred to him to validate it by argument or set it over against any mechanistic conception of the universe. The very first recorded words we have from his lips, "I must be in my Father's house," testify to the intuitive feeling he had that God was personal and good. The last words which escaped his breaking heart, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," testify how unfalteringly he

held to this invincible belief that a personal God was his Father.

But the fatherhood of God can mean nothing except in a world of persons, and hence we are driven to inquire further into Jesus' teaching about man. Here again we are left in no doubt. The most valuable thing in the world is human personality. All human beings are sacred. The stamp of the divine rests upon them. It may be marred by sin, but grace can restore the hallmark of its divinity. There are no worthless human beings, there are no hopeless children in God's family. There may be prodigal sons and daughters, but the spark of the better life will burn on until the Father's home and heart reclaim the lost. Nothing in human nature is ever hopeless in the eyes of Jesus.

"... not one life shall be destroy'd
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

He spent his days and gave his life in furnishing a practical demonstration of the soundness of this sublime optimism. He knew our nature, its perils and its perversities, yet he loved us with a love beyond our imagination. His faith in us is the ultimate ground of our faith in ourselves.

This idea that all men are the sons of God and that human personality is supreme is thus one of the basic presuppositions of Jesus. He does not attempt to

philosophize about it. He is no formal moralist or theologian, but it comes out in the attitude of his own personality to other personalities and in his teachings about life. There is hardly a page of the Gospels upon which this idea of the essential worth of persons is not portrayed. His identification with a humble home, his choice of simple Galilean fishermen as disciples, his willingness to trust his cause to human hearts, his denunciation of hypocrisy, his love of little children, his disregard of material goods, his indifference to worldly authority, his love of the sinner, his vision of good in men and women whom the world rejected, his patience with human failure and disloyalty—all these and many other attitudes reveal how he valued and trusted the human stuff of which we are made.

This was a new and revolutionary doctrine. It was the death of an old order and the charter of a new. Even today we but dimly comprehend its far-reaching, revolutionary meaning in our world. But Jesus has spoken the final word and pointed the way that will lead us at last into the temple of the New Humanity.

II

I propose now to show how this doctrine of the sacredness of human personality evolved in the practice of Jesus from a theory into a program of life. He not only believed in the worth of persons, but he put

this conviction at the active center of his personal program. This is demonstrated in three hazardous and unconventional attitudes which he took.

1. *He risked the success of his earthly enterprise upon the power of his personal influence on men.* It must be noted that he did not at first realize the value of this method, for in his Galilean ministry he seems inclined to trust to popular enthusiasm, to believe that the Kingdom might come by the sustained loyalty of multitudes who heard his words and witnessed his miracles. But the unreliability of this method soon revealed itself, and we see him shunning the broad path of popular acclaim and walking the narrow road of personal fellowships. As the multitude fades from the picture, the inner circle of his disciples emerges and the burden of his ministry rests upon his faith in the power of his influence over these men. He literally commits his way and the destiny of the Kingdom to these untutored souls whom he had called "that they might be with him." They faltered in their loyalty, but he never hesitated; they failed him in the learning process, but he never forsook them. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you."

To our highly organized social science of power it all seems disastrously simple and ineffective. Here was a man who held a high commission from heaven ("Thou art my beloved son"), whose equipment included unlimited power and authority ("All authority

hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth"), and yet he dares to commit the success or failure of his mission to the simple, homely contacts which he has with a group of workingmen who followed him for three brief and hurrying years. And these disciples represented a cross-section of humanity. They had the characteristic weaknesses of our human race, offset, to be sure, by unsuspected qualities of character visible only to the discerning eyes of Jesus. And yet I wonder that he did not grow more disheartened over them. They were so slow of understanding, so superficial in their judgments, so shallow in their loyalties, that nothing except the patience of God could have held him to them all the way from Capernaum to Jerusalem.

It was no gamble with Jesus. He knew what was in man. He knew that once having seen the Highest they must love it. The "son of perdition" might remain cold to his wooing advances, but the others would come close to him and love would conquer at last. This faith in the responsiveness of the human spirit to the truth and to love incarnate in personality lies at the very foundation of his spiritual strategy. "As the *Father* hath sent *me*, even so send I *you*" means that the stream of redemptive energy originating in the soul of a personal God flows through the compassionate personal heart of his Son into the channel of our human spirits and through us to all persons everywhere. The stream is unbroken. God—Jesus—

you and I—partners in the ageless task of making love triumphant and virtue victorious in a personal universe.

We do not widely trust this principle of action today. The scientific set-up of our modern world tends to lay emphasis upon the priority of impersonal forces. The personal road to power is too slow, too naive, too exacting. Our contacts are so hurried that enriching fellowships are difficult. Our gipsy mania for loose attachments keeps us forever rovers not only physically but psychologically. In our spiritual contacts we are tent dwellers rather than home builders. The injunction of Froebel, "Go live with your children," would sound more appealing if we had not already turned over the education, social nurture, and religious training of our children to the various agencies in the community. We have neither the time nor the disposition to live with our children. We pay taxes and contributions to relieve us of a burden which, if we could only understand, presents our most glorious opportunity in life. The old-fashioned mother who was the companion and genius of her children's life has a daughter who is the president of the Parent-Teachers' Association. The annual Father and Son banquet is an institution that glosses over with sentimentality an amazing lack of understanding and comradeship between the modern dad and his growing boy.

Mass education is our most amazing denial of this

principle of life contagion. We herd our adolescents in droves into our high schools and turn them out branded with a diploma, victims of an educational system that levels down our youth to the standardized stamp of the utterly commonplace. A mob of four hundred in one graduating class—is that the flower of our educational system? Our colleges are little better. The same devastating impersonal process goes on there. The underpaid and overdriven professor figures his duty in terms of the periodic distribution of desiccated information to a class in whose personal life problems he has only the slightest interest. "Don't you get tired of teaching Latin?" was the question asked of the famous Sawney Webb, headmaster of the Webb School in Tennessee. "I don't teach Latin," he replied; "I teach boys." It is our blindness to this personal element that makes us unable to see that there is a life process which underlies and determines the efficacy of the educational process.

Thomas Beer in his brilliant volume, *The Mauve Decade—American Life at the End of the Nineteenth Century*, tells a story of a personality still greatly cherished on this campus. "There was a little revolt of one against the process of education at Vanderbilt University in the spring of 1891. The rebel was the son of a clergyman in Georgia, sensely shocked when a professor gave him a translation from Haeckel and a classmate advised him to read the perfumed insufficiency of Ernest Renan's life of Jesus. Rebellion

carried him through a quarrel with a young instructor and in to the chancellor, a Virginian gentleman named Landon Cabell Garland. The boy stammered out expostulations; biology, agnosticism, and the sinfulness of the French language bubbled together in his head, and, being a Georgian, he had committed an oration, before the old mathematician said in his thin, aged drawl: 'Men never amount to much until they outgrow their fathers' notions, sir.' The rebellion of 1891 ended with the injection of that thought among boiling prejudices. There came a stillness in Tennessee. The boy mumbled something and stumbled out of the room, whipped by twelve words from a drowsy magician in a chair beside a window."

2. *Jesus risked the continuance of his message upon personal witnesses rather than organizational machinery.* Those ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates were not as foolish as we are tempted to think. They had their disciples, a little inner circle with whom they shared their best thought and warmest feeling. And thus their influence became that not of an individual but of a school of thought. Being dead they yet spoke and the radiance of their lives and teachings remained long after their voices were still. William James in one of his charming letters bares his own passionate conviction: "As for me my bed is made: I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible

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molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets or like the capillary oozing of water and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time." Jesus trusted the perpetuity of his influence to a little group of men with whom he shared his life. "Ye are my witnesses," he said to them, and so deeply did his life penetrate into their beings that they could never shake off the challenge of his words or the lure of his ideal. If they were willing to abide in him and let his words abide in them, then all things were possible. And thus it proved. To the gates of Rome they pressed victoriously "in his name"; they died exultingly in scattered arenas "for the sake of Jesus"; they drank the bitter cup which the hostile world pressed to their lips "in remembrance of him." He could never die because there was always someone that loved him unto death.

We must not think that this method of Jesus was forced upon him by the simplicity and primitiveness of the ancient world. The very opposite is true. It was a world in bondage to hierarchies of politics and religion. Rome was master with a military and political organization that reached from the Tiber to the Euphrates. The Roman Empire was the symbol of might and enduring prowess. All the kingdoms of the world belonged to Caesar, but Jesus ignored him. And the "grandeur that was Rome" is no more,

but the glory of Jesus is coming over the hills of time.

"Red Caesar, take your banners down;
Saint Francis, lead us on.
In every city street and town
We hail your whiter dawn."

Judaism with its pharisaical and scribal framework completely dominated the picture of the first century. Rich in symbolism, meticulous in ritual, domineering in social custom, it completely channeled the religious sentiment of Jesus' day. If one would not ally himself with Rome, there was the synagogue and the temple. They offered the plain and obvious path to power. But he would not commit himself to either. He criticized their leaders, he undermined their traditions with the authority of his person, and definitely challenged their position by setting up against the phylactoried Pharisee and the aristocratic Sadducee a group of Galilean fishermen whose only claim to be heard and believed was that they were so untrammelled in tradition and spirit-born in reality that they could discern the truth and were willing to die in order to share it with all men. And the future belonged to them and belongs now to the children of freedom and light.

Well may we heed this truth in the church of our day. Preaching is still "truth through personality," and the measure of the truth is gauged by the clarity

and genuineness of the personal medium through which it comes in contact with life. Our sermons are no bigger than we are. But in less obvious ways this truth cuts in upon us today. The average preacher is being driven to become an administrator, an executive. More and more, protective assistants guard him from the public. The old pastoral contacts are difficult, if not impossible, in the modern parish. Slowly, perhaps grudgingly, we become detached from life. Our own souls are not refreshed with human intimacies. We deceive ourselves into thinking that we are bringing in the Kingdom by addressing the Rotary Club and opening the Morticians' Convention with prayer. I undertake to suggest that the most abiding influence that any of us can exercise is to be found in our personal intimate contact with a few individuals with whom we linger long enough really to share our hearts and our lives. I have a friend who has completed forty-four years of service as a missionary in Japan. He has reached the age of retirement, but he will soon return to the country which is real home to him. There he expects to gather around him a small band of Japanese youth, and with them he will share his mind and his Christian ideal of life. I firmly predict that these will prove to be the most fruitful years of his significant career. The hurrying world soon fills our position in the organization of which we were a part, but no

power on earth can supplant us in the heart of a friend.

This little story comes from the husband and biographer of Alice Freeman Palmer, the first woman president of Wellesley: "‘Why will you give all your time to speaking before uninstructed audiences, to discussion in endless committees, to anxious interviews with tired and tiresome women?’ I asked. ‘You would exhaust yourself less in writing books of lasting consequence. At present you are building no monument. When you are gone people will ask who you were, and nobody will be able to say.’ I always received the same indifferent answer. ‘Well, why should they say? I am trying to make girls wiser and happier. Books don’t help much toward that. They are entertaining enough, but really dead things. Why should I make more of them? It is people that count. You want to put yourself into people. They touch other people; these still others, and so you go on working forever.’”

3. *He trusts the acceptance of his truth to the response of the human spirit rather than to the authority and compulsion of tradition and dogma.* To what did Jesus appeal in his effort to win believers? Not to the church, although he revered it. Not to the Scriptures, even though he loved them. Not to the law of Israel, even though he respected it. Not to the fear of punishment or to the desire for the safety of heaven. No, his final appeal is always to

the heart taught by God. Patiently he lived with his disciples, shared his mind with them and loved them, trusting that in them there would be the quickening response to his divine nature and that the truth he spoke would be verified in their own hearts by the indwelling Spirit. He had no respect for the authority of tradition. Flesh and blood could not reveal ultimate reality to men. He built upon his confidence that in all of us there is a divine awareness and response, an interplay between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, and for this reason he dared to speak directly to the heart and experience of mankind. This explains why he "taught them as one having authority." His was a subtler but a more secure foundation for faith.

Very slowly do we understand how far-reaching and absolute is this test of truth which Jesus applied. It is easier to rest in our formulated creeds and ethical sanctions. Much of the confusion of our day comes from two causes. One is the insistence on carrying over into an evolving society the fixity of an ethical standard that was the result of an ancient but now overpast moral conflict. Morals, like the customs out of which they grow into sanctions, do change. I saw an amusing illustration of this confusion only the other day. Said a senator of the United States: "A year ago, if I had a hundred dollars in gold in my pocket, I was a law-abiding citizen; if I perchance had a pint of whiskey, I was a criminal. Today, if I

have the whiskey, I am a law-abiding citizen; but if I have the gold, I am a criminal violating the law."

Theologies change too, thank God. Neither the rigors of Calvinism with its transcendent sovereign God, nor the softness of modern Humanism with the vague immanence of the companionable hail-fellow-well-met type of Deity can command our intelligent loyalty. Is there then no fixed creed? Certainly not, and we may rejoice with all free souls that there is not. Authority is within. The truth is mediated to the responsive, enlightened soul. Doctrinal security depends upon ethical conduct. You cannot detach belief from life. "It is becoming increasingly clear that the church will be unable to believe what she is unwilling to practice."

The second cause of our confusion is the evident uncertainty that characterizes our thinking today. Some libertine may cry, "There is no standard, there is no law, there is no commandment." It is clear that his eagerly grasped delusion of liberty grows out of his inward moral plight. He is an adolescent in the moral order. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." The law that he has missed is the "law of the spirit of life," made understandable in Jesus Christ. There is a moral law, but it is not a series of commands or outward regulations. The spiritual man does not live by the Ten Commandments; he lives by the law of love. If a man betrays the light that is in him, soon he has no

light to betray. Having loved darkness, he walks in darkness and stumbles into the ditch of his own blindness.

This commerce of spirit between God and man, this inward authority of the enlightened conscience, is the true soil and secret of our catholicity. If God speaks directly to the individual soul, then there is no standardized formula of revelation. To each as he needs and to all as they can hear seems his way. When Peter returned from his adventure with the gospel among the Gentiles, he defended his liberal conduct by reminding the church in Jerusalem that "the same Spirit which bade (him) go with them making no distinction" also "gave unto them the like gift as he did unto us." And this gift was not the law but the Spirit, bearing witness with their spirits that they also were the sons of God. Thus early Christianity had its walls broken down by the gentle winds of God which blew as they listed and found amid Gentile and Jews, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, the responsive chord that set up the music of eternity in human hearts everywhere. How blasting is that word of Jesus to the complacent leaders of his day, "And they shall come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God," while the self-satisfied religionist shall be "cast forth without." God has been busy through the centuries raising up "children unto Abraham." If I get to heaven I expect to meet

Francis of Assisi, Dante, Raphael, Charles Darwin, Mahatma Gandhi, and a host of other knights of the Holy Grail who do not speak my language but who have heard in their souls the Eternal Word of the Living God.

III

The struggle of our generation is to rescue these values from threatening defeat. The era in which we live presents a strange theater of conflict. On the one hand never have we witnessed so many noble philanthropies and such widespread efforts for social betterment. On the other hand never have we seemed so profligate of dearly won human rights as in this contemporary moment. We despoil our forests, we denude our soil, we squander our oil, but the greatest wastage is our sin against the treasury of human personality. When we break down personal character and self-esteem we entail a poverty from which no returning prosperity can rescue us. The present hour is thrusting that peril in our face. If in our efforts to relieve the acute poverty of millions of our fellow-citizens we undercut self-reliance and create a false psychology that bids stranded men and women look to agencies outside themselves for permanent economic salvation, then we have fostered a depression of the human spirit far more calamitous than our present national emergency.

Three of these modern perils to the higher life of the individual may be briefly recited here.

1. *The pressure of authoritarianism.* We are having a recrudescence of autocracy throughout the world. It is the golden day of the dictator. The individual withers as the state grows. Democracy is again on trial, and most of the modern nations have voted against it. Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler—and shall we add Roosevelt?—are the colorful symbols of a new day in public life. They did not create their dictatorships; they merely capitalized the determination of the populace to stop thinking and let somebody else lead. When men are in the wilderness they will submit to any Moses who will lead them out, particularly if he can wear the uniform of Joshua. They will grumble, but they will not turn down the manna of the dole. At present one out of every six persons in the United States is supported directly or indirectly by the government. Upon his arrival recently in London, General Smuts of South Africa declared that there was in Europe less of liberty in its full meaning than there had been for two thousand years. "The disappearance of the sturdy, independent-minded, freedom-loving individual, and his replacement by a servile mass mentality, is the greatest human menace of our time."

I recall hearing a Christian worker, long a resident in Germany, say to us in a seminar shortly after he came out of Europe: "Modern German youth is not

any longer concerned about personal salvation. It simply doesn't reach him. He has but one interest, one passion, the salvation of Germany. His life has meaning only as it is submerged and absorbed in the state. His motto is 'For me, nothing; for Germany, all.' " One can easily understand the events that have led a desperate Germany to substitute "Heil Hitler" for her ancient and more worthy defiance, "*Hier stehe Ich. Ich kann nicht anders.*" But it is none the less tragic and will inevitably lead to that mass servility which is the forerunner of the goose-step morality of Bismarck that led to modern Germany's humiliation.

And we in America need to be careful how we hurl the cynic's ban. With unprecedented power in the hands of one political party, with two hundred corporations controlling thirty-eight per cent of the business wealth of the country, with the death of the independent American newspaper, with the screen and radio available for subsidized or dictated propaganda, with every other fellow you meet expecting somebody or some alphabetical bureau to pull him out of the hole, and with the American Legion and the D. A. R. telling us all how to behave—well, it's a hard old world for the individual in "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

2. *Our indiscriminating enthusiasm for freedom.* While not wholly responsible, the World War brought in its aftermath many difficult moral problems. Four

million men detached from the normal restraints of home and society found themselves fighting not only an enemy without but an even subtler foe within. And when the war was over and the discipline of the military was lifted, they tended to swing to the extreme of license. A sense of abandon took hold of American life and we undertook to compensate for our tension and our loss by a wild and needless rush into mad pleasure and unbridled freedom. We swung into the jazz age. From depression we leaped to the dizzy heights of reckless prosperity. Things obsessed us. We were free to do our own way. We tired of good government. We would obey no law that irked us. We revolted against every type of inhibition. The Puritans were anathema. We nullified prohibition, liberalized our divorce laws, played the stock markets, swindled trust funds, reveled in rotten pictures, indulged in sexual promiscuity, and found a philosophy to justify our Bohemian licentiousness. At last we were free.

We are beginning to discover, however, that freedom is not enough. We need something more—we need honor, integrity, and self-restraint. We had lost our moral perspectives. We had overlooked the principle that when an external restraint is removed an inner authority must take its place. Our homes break down because the continuance of the marriage bond is dependent upon co-operation, mutual respect, and personal character, and these qualities are so

often lacking in our modern adults. Liberty turned into license soon becomes slavery. The confusion of this transition era through which we are passing is largely explained by the fact that we see the emptiness of our recent liberty, but we do not have the moral fortitude to lay hold on our higher freedom, the freedom of obedience and altruism. Our only hope is to build up moral and spiritual reserves in personal wills and thus make men and women truly free because they are harmoniously related to their personal and social environment. Freedom is a means to an end and never an end in itself.

3. *The modern emphasis upon the social gospel has led to the disparagement of the individual.* Paul Elmer More, speaking recently to a group of theological students, gave it as his conviction that the church is neglecting its main business, that of its mission to the individual soul. "The most effective weapon of the church in her campaign against the unnecessary evils of society, her one great instrument for bringing into play some measure of true justice as distinct from ruthless law of competition and from equally ruthless will to power of the proletariat, is through the restoration in the individual human soul of a sense of spiritual values." We are under no necessity of choosing between the social gospel and the personal gospel. We believe ardently in both. But our aroused social conscience and our sense of indignation at a social order that is so unjust, so unscrupulous,

and so predatory that it can be called "a devil's cauldron, brewed in a hell of ignorance and selfishness" has just about made social reformers out of most of us. We need to ask ourselves again as to the distinctive function of the church and the minister in the social order. We shall be brought back to reaffirm that we can never change the world unless and until we can change men. "Rolling up our sleeves and getting busy for the Kingdom of God" is all very good, but it is not a *gospel*. It's a program, and until it is shot through with a sense of personal spiritual values made possible through Christ it will not be confirmed by Christian intelligence. As Dr. Albert Day says, "While we want a new world for the sake of new people, we must have new people for the sake of a new world." Nearly twenty years ago one of the great prophets of social justice wrote some penetrating words which may well be pondered today by the preacher: "Earnest people go to church very wistful, and what they crave from Christian preaching is not instruction about reforms. They want release for the frozen springs of will and feeling, power imparted to open the soul to the inflowing grace of God. Too often the modern pulpit evades their need. Too often the modern Church seems like a great machine for the cheery promotion of social welfare. . . . But if the Christian will has a distinctive contribution to make, such a contribution must spring from the distinctive Christian convictions.

. (The church's) business is with life on the higher level, the life regenerate. On this level she must teach; from this level she must appeal." There is no use to move a man to "a cleaner sty" unless we may make him less content to be a hog. As we challenge boldly the un-Christian social order we shall also summon to battle the spiritual resources latent in the average man. At last the universe exists for him and brotherhood waits until the sense of sonship to God shall bind all men in a common struggle for the good life.

Long and bitter has been the climb out of the jungle of the brute into the table-land of the spirit. But we are on our way because we have seen the goal of our humanity in the face of the Perfect Man, and we shall never rest until "beholding the glory of the Lord we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory" and "attain unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."



GROWTH AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Growth and the Creative Process

IN the spring of 1925 there took place in the little town of Dayton, Tennessee, a most unusual and significant court proceeding. A young school-teacher, educationally competent and morally sound, was tried, convicted, and ejected from his position for teaching his pupils in science the evolutionary theory of the origin of the physical universe. The nation-wide interest in this strange proceeding was heightened by the colorful participation in the defense and prosecution of two of the outstanding men in American public life, Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan. It is a singular fact that neither of these brilliant advocates did any real service to the cause they gratuitously undertook to represent. Incidentally, we may turn aside to remark that recent events indicate that Mr. Bryan was a better political statesman than religious prophet, a reversal of the almost unanimous judgment passed upon him at the height of his notable career. His reputa-

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tion as a political seer is rising; while no less surely his position as a defender of the faith is slowly passing out of public esteem.

We shall always be greatly indebted to the Tennessee legislature for making this trial necessary, yea even inevitable. Sometimes we do not realize that an idea is dead until we attend its funeral. Dayton was the public opportunity to preach the funeral of a dead traditionalism. The only further comment necessary is that the episode reverted to the earlier American custom of delivering the funeral oration some months or years *after* the deceased had passed away.

I

What is this traditional view of the world and its origin? It has grown up from so many widely scattered myths, legends, scriptures, and preachments that it is not easy to gather all its features into an inclusive statement. But the core of this traditional view of the origin of things may be briefly stated as follows: There was a time in eternity when nothing existed except God. He decided at a particular moment to create a world by fiat. First, he flung out the heavens and the earth; then plants and animals; lastly man. Man was created male and female in God's image and into them he breathed a living soul. Adam and Eve were innocent, and so long as they remained thus they enjoyed freedom

from toil, immortal leisure. They lived in a neat cosmic framework. The earth was the fixed center of the universe. Above it were the moon and the stars and heaven, and below was the abyss of hell. It was a physically small and tidy universe into which the only element of discord was introduced by the sin of our forefathers, which entailed upon them banishment and sweaty toil and upon us, their helpless progeny, the inevitable stain of a guilty nature. God was the architect of this world; and having created it, he viewed it from a distance while it rested peacefully in its static tranquillity. But when something went wrong he stepped back into it, frequently in visible form, and repaired the damage or remolded the material to suit his divine purpose. The map of this cosmogony can be found in Dante's *Divine Comedy* or its Protestant counterpart, Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Its classical expression in theology will be discovered in the writings of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century.

This conception of the universe has dominated seven hundred years of Christian thought. It cannot be nonchalantly tossed aside. It gave to our forefathers a satisfying answer to their search after natural and divine origins. Before we heap upon this theological system our withering scorn let us remember that the science of that day shared the primitive limitations which characterized theology. The scientific man of the thirteenth century was just as anti-

quoted as was his religious brother. In fact about the only scientific light to be discovered in those dark days was in the monasteries of the church. And it is at least an ungenerous act for one generation to look with disdain upon the intellectual and spiritual struggles out of which they were born into a higher and more rational faith.

The traditional view can never again assert its authority over the modern mind. We live in a world conditioned by a revolutionary fact, the rise of modern science. Galileo knocked the first plank out of the old platform of a static finished universe, and then followed Darwin and Wallace and Huxley, and in their train a host whom no man can number whose spirit in the main is as reverent as their scientific hypothesis is unyielding. Frankness and intellectual honesty compel us to face the implication and the challenge that is implicit in the statement of a modern philosopher: "This system is an imposing edifice; but either modern science is false through and through, or the traditional system is in irremediable ruin. It is time to stop trying to patch up the old ruin and build a new mansion in which our spirits may dwell and grow in freedom, light, and power."

We are compelled to admit that every other institution of modern life has adjusted itself to these scientific conclusions more quickly than religion. But even here we are being brought to face the inevitable, and I am persuaded that we may face it not reluc-

tantly with a groan but confidently with a cheer. Christianity must not be left in "an abandoned shell hole on a deserted battlefield." Her place is at the front of every advance that offers hope and freedom and dignity to human values in the universe. We should never have had any quarrel at any time with reverent science. True humility becomes both groups as they pick up a few grains of sand on the infinite shores of knowledge. In the kingdom of truth there can be no rivalry, as truth is never at war with truth. We are not here suggesting a grand compromise for the sake of peace; we are urging a better understanding for the sake of a united advance into new kingdoms of reality and value that await today our united labors.

True religion has lost nothing in this struggle. Evolution itself was only a way of development. It might have changed our ideas about God's ways of creation, but it never undertook to displace the Supreme Intelligence from the creative process. The theistic conception of the universe becomes increasingly unavoidable in our day. The mechanistic realism of a few decades ago is not validating itself in the eyes even of modern scientists. Lord Kelvin, the greatest philosophical scientist of the closing days of the last century, wrote: "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and the flowers

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which he saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, 'No, no more than I could believe that the books of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.' Every action of human free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science." Modern skepticism is joining its erstwhile antagonist, conservative theology, in an orderly retreat before the advancing certainty that this is a growing universe. It is ever changing, ever becoming, and at the heart and in the heat of it there is a living, loving God.

"These infinite tasks are portents of a Work
Afoot among us toward transcendent ends;
Behind these ruins and these hungers lurk
Strategies unsurmised and secret trends;
And once again our world shall see the bud
Of patience burst in miracle of bloom,
And once again our race shall see a flood
Of sudden grace shed glory in the gloom."

I should like to insist that we shall be better Christians if we frankly recognize that we live in the twentieth century and not in the thirteenth and that the implications of the new scientific knowledge constitute, in the large, an asset and not a liability to faith. The vast multitude of youth pouring from our public schools and colleges will not be won to a vital Christianity by any vociferous defense of an outworn and irrational obscurantism. The Christian

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message must continuously validate itself in the tribunals of truth. Its refusal to do so can only mark its retirement to the marginal areas of men's affection where no central conflicts of characters are ever waged and won. "This intellectual backwardness of the Church is nothing less than a calamity to religion, because it begets and continues the notion that religion is essentially a thing of inferior intellect, and that it is afraid to come out into the open field of the world where plain secular daylight shines, and to be tested. This notion is something seriously to be deplored."

II

How great are the riches that belong to us when once we have accepted a growing, expanding, evolving universe in the place of a static and finished world! Let us uncover our eyes and behold in grateful amazement an unfolding panorama surpassing our ancient dreams.

We gain a new conception of nature. It is the vestment of the Eternal. God is expressing himself and his feeling for beauty in every passing sunset, in each recurring Springtime, in every flower "in the crannied wall," and in every tree "that looks at God all day and lifts its leafy arms to pray." "Consider the lilies of the field" which God doth "so clothe" with beauty.

We see God at work in his world evolving his pur-

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pose in nature and man, the ever active Agent that leads from darkness to light, that chastens us with calamity, that nurtures our hopes and confirms our faith in ourselves and our universe. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

Human life attains new dignity by virtue of its partnership with God in the creative process. God could not make Stradivarius' violin without Stradivarius. Nor can he make a world without us. Its final culmination is dependent upon the wisdom, the courage, the devotion of mortal men. God always leaves an unfinished task upon the world's workbench. "For we are God's fellow-workers."

God is brought near to us and becomes imminent in the evolving life around us. No longer aloof and sovereignly remote watching us as a Judge from a throne but intimately near, the Power that worketh in us to will and to do. "In him we live and move and have our being."

He is the perpetual Creator. His task is never finished. Mutations, evolvments, spectacular variations, new knowledge, spiritual goals achieved—all testify to an immanent, ongoing, creative urge. From the tiniest satellite of the solar system to the vast galaxy of stars, there is no sign of chaos. There is nothing haphazard, nothing capricious. "All things have been created through him—and in him all things *bold together*."

Life becomes a grand adventure. We are caught

in the surge of the centuries and escape the eddies of a dead and finished universe. The future will be what we make it. Our children shall stand on our shoulders. The universe will yield to our insistent, relentless moral endeavor. We are forever voyaging and we have lifted anchor for the port of a better country "whose builder and maker is God."

The cross of Christ becomes no longer a historical spectacle but a living dynamic re-enacted every day before our eyes. A suffering God patiently bearing the afflictions of his children, toiling up the slopes of our modern calvaries, condemning us with his patient forbearance, winning us with his breaking heart to a better understanding of our brother man and our Father-God. This is the Christ of every road, whose cross, set up before the foundation of the world in the heart of the Eternal, is our shame and perchance our glory. Thus may we behold the riches that belong to us when once we have been delivered from the bondage of a static world and contemplate the challenge and the charm of a dynamic universe.

If we have come to terms with this idea of continuing growth in the physical realm, we may with better grace appreciate its application to the world of the spirit. For there is a natural law in the spiritual world as well as a spiritual law in the natural world. The spiritual genius of Jesus is clearly revealed in the consistent manner in which he patiently trusted

the evolving laws of spiritual nurture in accomplishing his purpose on earth. Jesus believed in the principle of the mustard seed, not the charge of dynamite. For him the Kingdom of God came not with observation but quietly, steadily in personalities that unfolded to the truth as the flower opens to the sun. Let us examine the evidences for this approach as they are revealed in his earthly life.

One of the most arresting aspects of the life of Jesus comes to our attention as we study the calm and unhurried manner in which he sets about his life task. He moved toward his goal without forcing situations or crowding his truth upon his listeners. Even at the end when events got out of his control and wild excitement threw the multitudes and the disciples into a panic, Jesus never lost his poise. Having chosen his path, he walked with unhurrying but unhesitating footsteps in that way. We may understand this attitude more clearly if we go back to those decisive days in the wilderness. There the Evil One had offered him a compromise, a quick and easier road to the hearts of men. "Worship me and I will give you the kingdom you seek." But the worldly suggestion left Jesus cold and unresponsive. He would win but not accept as a gift his place in the hearts of men. He would grow with them into the understanding of God and the new kingdom. It was a slow, painful road at the end of which there was not a crown but a cross. But

was it not his Father's way? Did not all the story of Jehovah's dealings with Israel make clear the point that personal and social goals can never be arbitrarily imposed upon men from above; they must be co-operatively won in a fellowship of toil and sacrifice. At every step of the weary road there was the possibility of a short cut that would have spared him pain and disappointment, but it was a cheap and unworthy substitute for honor and lasting victory.

The relationship of Jesus to his disciples makes this truth even clearer. What was the principle upon which he chose those particular twelve men? It can be no other than his confidence that in them he had found that divinest of all qualities, the capacity for growth. He saw in them that day by Gennesaret not commonplace Galilean fishermen. As in a dream he saw them standing before kings, judging the world, binding and loosing the destinies of men, laying the foundations of an everlasting kingdom, setting in motion a power that should establish here on earth the Commonwealth of God. No ordinary, drab, mediocre working men these! Called to be saints, ordained of God for the rising and the falling of the nations.

With this vision before him he set out patiently to nurture these disciples up to their spiritual capacities. It was discouraging business, at times, almost heart-breaking. They moved so slowly toward spir-

itual manhood. "How long time shall I be with you?" "Have I been so long time with you and yet dost thou not know me?" "Before the cock shall crow thou shalt deny me." These flashes out of the heart of Jesus reveal how he was tempted to give up and yield to the pressure of the multitude for a sign, a messianic cataclysm that would blast his way to power when he could not achieve it through the medium of personal loyalties. But he held to his confidence in these men because he trusted absolutely the power of his method of creating discipleship. The gates of hell would not prevail against the rock of Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ." He had waited long to ask his question. He had given them time to grow into an understanding of his nature, and now because the roots of this confession had sunk deep into the soil of their convictions he could implicitly trust it. Faith is indigenous. It must grow in the mind and heart of each life. Each in the garden of his own soul grows the white flower of his faith in God.

Even more obvious is this principle as we see it set forth in the teachings of Jesus. Over and over he makes clear, by parable and precept, the central truth that growth is God's way of achieving results. The multitude became impatient, the disciples restive, the authorities scornful under his persistent devotion to the educational method. But he kept on talking about growth, about the revolutionary power of an

idea turned loose upon the world. The kingdom of God is like leaven hidden in meal. By the very law of its nature it transforms the enveloping mass into which it is placed. No miracle from without, a law working from within. There is the mustard seed, so small it can be blown away by any gust of wind, but it has in it potentialities that are positively unbelievable except to faith. Once congenially environed, by the law of its being, it grows and grows until under its ample shade men rest from their journeys. Why should Jesus tell a parable such as this except to make clear the point that as the mustard seed grows so does the Kingdom of God come among men? Slowly, surely by the law of life that is within it, and not by some constraint imposed from without or from above.

We can never understand Jesus' sublime confidence in the triumph of righteousness and goodness until we appraise this spiritual principle for its true value. He saw the downfall of Satan, the world-wide spread of the Good News, the impregnable stability of the church, the victory of his cross to whose foot all men should ultimately be drawn. All this with the eye of faith he beheld. And what right have we to say that these are merely the phantasies of an impractical dreamer? Too many of his principles of growth and progress have been validated by the experience of the race for us to be too cynically sure in our determined pessimism. Possibly we have never estimated the

transforming power of belief in God. Age after age dreams of and seeks for its utopia only to find it a receding but ever beckoning goal. The most encouraging fact about it all is that men refuse to be content with anything less than a good world, and this divine discontent is the yeast of God working as leaven in the lump of our social aspiration. Our undefeatable optimism is our surest index of final triumph.

III

We have seen how this principle of development by the laws of growth is written in the natural order and manifested in the attitudes and teachings of Jesus. If it is a fundamentally determinative idea in the universe and in the strategy of the spiritual life, it carries along with it certain implications which must be examined. For here seemingly is a governing principle of large import. Let us study it in two central fields of life, Christian experience and Christian intelligence.

First, *in the field of Christian experience*. The most difficult task confronting each of us is the building of a unified, harmonious, and triumphant personality. We are our own greatest problem. As Job said many years ago, "the root of the matter is in me." The conquest of myself is the greatest victory I can win. Spiritual personalities do not merely happen in our world, they grow by certain discover-

able rules or principles which are not difficult to discern if we set our minds to the task. What is the road into Christian selfhood?

We must reckon with the law of the determined will. Not even God can make us what we do not want to be. If we do not deep down in our hearts want virtue, we shall not have it. "No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." Jesus set this idea clearly before us in his parable of the pearl of great price. Unless a man has a sense of comparative values, is willing to sacrifice lower interests for higher, "sell all that he had" in order to attain the great prize, he must go without it. Those who made excuses for not following him were merely temporizing with life and not seriously seeking it. The young ruler whose high ethical character appealed to Jesus lost his chance because he refused to subordinate the lesser claims upon him to the higher demands of discipleship. Knowing how rigorous were the demands upon his followers, Jesus would encourage no half-hearted, sentimental attachment to the Christian life. There was a calculation as to cost which each man must make before he sets out to build. He would make it clear that there was a cross to be borne and would let no uncourageous and vacillating disciple enter upon the narrow way unaware of the exacting requirement of all those who seek to follow him.

And then the secret lies in a willingness to learn. Was not this the essential meaning of his days of

intimate fellowship with the twelve? He was not laying down before them a blueprint of his new kingdom; he was making men by subjecting their minds and hearts to creative ideas and high-challenging ideals. They were being taught in the school of Christ, and he was unwilling they should undertake to bring in the Kingdom in his name until they should be at least reasonably intelligent about it. They must grow into faith and knowledge. The interest of Jesus is always in making a disciple and not a convert. He cared little for quick, ill-considered decisions that did not meet the supreme challenge of discipleship. He would rather do a thorough, well grounded piece of education with a small, selected group of responsive souls than be embarrassed by a multitude that followed him to see the miracle or eat of the loaves and fishes. Numbers counted for nothing with Jesus. Sincerity and teachableness were all.

We have lost that strategy. We major on quantity results and not quality productions. We lead converts over the line of the Christian life and there they are, religious "innocents abroad," expecting the old ship of Zion to take them into port. Meanwhile the devil scuttles the ship, and they flounder around in the cold seas of doubt and religious indifference. They simply haven't the awakened mind or the moral hunger to become good Christians. They are adults with adolescent religious experiences. Then they

wonder why the church is so dead, the preacher so dull, and religious people so uninteresting.

The church needs a revival of intelligence. The average listener knows so little about the Bible that he cannot follow the simplest line of biblical exposition. The preacher, knowing this, no longer expounds the Bible; he uses it as a homiletic spring-board from which he dives into the sea of the trivial and contemporary. Here is the explanation of so much of our confusion in the matter of social ethics. Most of it is plain downright ignorance. Sit down with the average modern business man and try to talk out with him the application of the Sermon on the Mount to his business and see how far you get. He is much more intelligent about all the factors involved in that business than he is in its relation to the ethics of Jesus. In fact, he reserves his concern over what Jesus thinks about it for Sunday morning when he is safely detached from the practicalities of the business world. There is a kind of gracious beneficence about him, but when it comes to an intelligent comprehension of the fundamentals of the Christian way of life, he is a child and is usually willing to live and die in such a juvenile state of complacent, self-protective ignorance.

But the modern man is not wholly to blame. We make no adequate effort to teach him. Many of our churches have no educational ideal and still depend upon bizarre revivalism to accomplish their numerical

salvation. But even where we have an educational set-up, it functions with alarming ineffectiveness. One wonders what the ordinary layman carries away from the average Sunday morning Bible class after the element of rotarian fellowship is drained off. Too often it is twenty minutes of pious palaver about as much related to the practical life of the listener as the topography of Palestine is to the man flying the mail over the Rocky Mountains. One reason so many big men in the world of affairs around us have little to do with the church is because we take our task so casually and deal with the issues we are handling as though they were temporary and trivial rather than eternal and imperious. When once we comprehend all that goes into making a real Christian we shall no longer be content to treat our educational task with such alarming ineffectualness. And if Christianity actually holds the salvation for our modern confusion and bewilderment, it behooves us to come out from under the Pauline indictment that we "have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

Thirdly, there is in building Christian selfhood the technique of spiritual culture. We know more about the culture of our soils than we do about the culture of our souls. For a long time we have been held under the tyranny of the idea that spiritual life was something imparted from above and is entirely unrelated to spiritual laws or conditions. God could make a man spiritually minded and full of the Holy

Ghost if he so desired without any help from the man himself. I have heard men pray for "the gift of the Holy Spirit" as though it were some divine dowry that an amiable Deity would bestow upon them for their "much speaking." Pentecost came as God's answer to certain spiritual conditions and could not have come to an indifferent and preoccupied church which was unwilling to conform to these conditions. They were obeying Jesus' command, they had overcome fear, they were united in a fellowship of possessions, they were in earnest prayer, they were waiting upon the Lord, and because of this preparedness of heart "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Much of our praying must be wearisome to the Almighty when he realizes how little we do to make possible the answer to our own petitions.

May I suggest some of our lost technique in spiritual culture? The Bible is largely an abandoned book among Christians. Jesus nurtured his spirit on the experiences of his predecessors recorded in the Scriptures and found the Word of God "a light unto his feet." But the average modern church member finds little in the Bible that he can understand and less that interests him. One reason for this is the decline of the magical conception of the Bible which made it an unvarying final authority on all questions in the world and out of it. When it became clear that some intellectual discrimination was necessary to understand the Bible, a host of people lost interest in it

right then and there. Men will go to almost any lengths to avoid thinking, and the Scriptures were to many persons a kind of talismanic medium which they might consult when in doubt. All this is becoming increasingly less respectable, and in consequence many people have given up the Bible. One may question, to be frank, whether their last state is much worse than their first.

Our handling of the material of biblical knowledge has also been much to blame. Although we are well aware that some portions of the Bible are of only historical and academic interest, we still hold on to them in spite of the fact that few, if any, ever read them, and the few that do, gain virtue by "reading the Bible through" and not by any ideas they get from Song of Songs or Leviticus. And we teach the Bible to our undergraduates very much as we do geography or history. A student may know all about the division of the kingdom and nothing about the breakdown of his own inner authorities; he may sketch the missionary journeys of St. Paul and yet remain a hopeless provincial; he may know perfectly the Judean ministry of Jesus and never be brought to face the implications for his own career of the life and teachings of the Master. The Bible will come back when men cease to use it as a fetish, when they study it as a pattern of life, when they begin to meet the ethical conditions in thought and conduct which

make them sympathetic with the lofty idealism of these prophets and seers of old.

The conditions of our modern life make quietude difficult, if not impossible. We are all subjects in "the kingdom of din." That deep silence of the spirit in which great souls are born and nurtured is crowded out by the noisy, harried, and overdriven existence that plagues us all with its clamorous, unrelenting demands. Dr. Chalmers hits us squarely when he says, "We are wasting our substance in commonplace living. We are not giving to the world convincing evidence that the Way of Life which we profess is worth it." And Dean Inge catches us in the thrust of his question: "If we spend sixteen hours a day dealing with tangible things and five minutes a day dealing with God, is it any wonder that tangible things are two hundred times more real than God?" We must somehow recapture our lost ecstasies, rebuild our broken inner sanctuaries, and kindle once more the flame on the altars of our hearts.

Secondly, the church cannot hope to escape the demands of this principle of growth *in her intellectual attitudes*. When the mind stops functioning the whole body bears the sign of death. "It is a strange commentary that the head never begins to swell until the mind stops growing." Religion is normally very conservative. Its intellectual discoveries tend to harden into dogmas, and in place of the thrill of new adventures in the realm of thought there is likely to

be the satisfaction of guarding the "faith once for all delivered." Theology thus becomes a battleground characterized more by a heavy defensive movement than a valiant offensive. The queen of the sciences turns out to be a grandmother with chimney corner propensities rather than a young maiden with the wind blowing her hair and the breath of the morning in her face. And yet it remains true that as Christianity outthought the world of the first century so it must still overcome by the integrity of its ideas and philosophy this modern temper of ours. Whenever becoming a Christian slows down the mental process of an individual he has mistaken the true nature of the faith he has espoused. There should always be something eternally vibrant and provocative about accepting Christ.

Let us not forget or evade the fact that the ideas of Jesus were novel, unconventional, and revolutionary. In fact, they were high explosives under the complacency of the religious world of his day. His enemies destroyed him not because they hated him personally but because they feared the disastrous consequences of his ideas upon the ordered security of their world. Jesus was a young intellectual radical. Because the church of his day was afraid to think, it crucified him and with the same hand wrote its own death decree. When Jesus revealed the inadequacy of the Mosaic law he was invading the most treasured precinct of orthodoxy. We must never

forget this fact, that he was a heretic to his generation. He was destroying the priceless heritage and sanctions of the fathers. They finally concluded that he was "out of his mind." The Christian faith in every generation has owed an enormous debt to its critics, its skeptics, its heretics. They have started us into investigations and punctured our theological complacencies and driven us to our defenses until they have thoroughly irritated us, but the process has been as wholesome for the church as it has been uncomfortable for the heretics. A religion that can exist only because it is never questioned cannot command the intelligent loyalty of people today. If Jesus had not expected his followers to use their mental faculties he would never have left a set of principles requiring adaptation to differing ages and conditions. He would have given rules and laws which better fit the habits of children. It is a moral, yea a Christian duty to be intelligent.

It has recently become evident that the injunction to be alert in intellectual awareness is one that works two ways. If we must guard against blind subservience to the past, we must equally beware lest we be lulled into accepting some of the new theology offered us today. There is a spirit and a philosophy of naturalism, or better named, secularism abroad which needs to be carefully studied. It exalts man, stresses environmental influences, denies the supernatural, scorns the mystical, exalts social

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values, belittles doctrines, passes by the fact of sin, makes prayer purely subjective, excludes revelation, identifies God with the cosmic process, and damns Jesus with faint praise. The church can no more escape the necessity for thinking through these humanistic expressions of our modern life than she can avoid continually evaluating the deposit of days gone by. Once the command to "prove all things" is accepted by the church there can be no exemptions in the past or present. All alike must submit to the test of intelligence by an awakened mind. Only thus can the church remain "the ground and pillar of the truth."

Shall I be guilty of inconsistency if, on top of all that has been said, I insist that *the secret of Christianity is not in its rationality but in its enthusiasm?* It can never be detached from life. Here is the danger confronting both the conservative and the liberal elements in the church today. The former would stress an otherworldliness which would make religion no longer a current issue, while the latter would turn the church into a debating society on what's wrong with the economic order. It is wholesome for religion to be tempered with intelligence, but we must not forget its chief business still remains "that of raising mild and wholesome trouble on a wide scale through its persistent enthusiasm for the ideal." Thus the church must carry her banner of truth into every intellectual fray, but she must also be found

always on the frontier of every moral advance. How strikingly this dual function of the Christian is illustrated by St. Paul! He had not only a theology that was the product of his changing experience, but he had also a frenzy for translating religious enthusiasm into a persistent agitation for a better world. And so the church must think, to be sure, but it must also dare.

Recently I visited the catacombs of San Sebastiano in Rome. More than eight miles of subterranean passages, on three levels, give back to us the burial places of the sacred dead of those first three Christian centuries. Over three million Christian graves have been identified as a testimony to the reach of the gospel during its first three hundred years. I was particularly impressed with the fact that some of the crypts I saw were surmounted by an arch. Upon inquiry I discovered that only the burial places of the martyrs who met a violent death were thus designated. I was told that one hundred and seventy-four thousand such graves had been discovered and marked in the catacombs of Rome. They wrote in blood their conviction that Christianity was by its very nature a challenge to the world order, a thrust at intrenched iniquity, and not simply a doctrinaire debating society which "meets to discuss and remains to resolve." The world could not understand such fanaticism as was displayed by the early Christians. Slowly we are discovering that, like the cross of Je-

sus, it was a protest against the cruelty of the world order and a manifesto that a new principle had been born into the world which would in time revolutionize our thinking and remold our institutional life.

Once in so often there seems to break upon our struggling universe a revolutionary, transforming idea or fact. The world is never the same after its birth. The loyalties of men gather around it and they carve out a new destiny for humanity in the name and through the power of this gloriously emerging fact. Paul sets forth this experience with graphic, moving lines in the Epistle to the Romans. After indicting universal mankind with the stain of waywardness and sin, he cries with unconcealed and fervent enthusiasm, "*But now*, apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested!" Sin as a principle of death has been conquered by grace as a principle of life. To the last and least man in the world there has come deliverance, salvation, eternal life. To our humiliating confusion be it said that we contemplate this redeeming fact, manifested in Christ, with enthusiasm that but dimly approaches the ecstasy of those in the first fresh years when the gospel was young and the hearts of men were hungrier for God. If only again we could feel "the madness and the elevation of the cross!"

IV

Is the world growing better? Who has not either

asked or heard that query? It is so frequently asked because men so eagerly desire an affirmative answer. The idea of progress, the yearning for the discovery of a purpose evidently fulfilling itself in evolutionary progression in the world about us, seems to be a necessary basis for any substantial optimism. If the universe is being whipped, who among us is not tempted to cowardice? What matters it if we do win our personal battle only to see our world struggle go down in defeat? The Stoic may contemplate that with equanimity, but the Christian cannot separate his own fortunes from those of his neighbors and his world. And so for our own spirit's temper we must seek an answer, believing that we shall find at the end of our search renewed confidence in the fundamental integrity of the universe and the ultimate victory of light over darkness, virtue over sin, personality over blind mechanism, God over evil.

This happy consummation will not come as the result of blind and unvolitional forces resident in the universe. Goodness is not self-propagating or evil self-eliminating. Progress is not inevitable. Herbert Spencer missed it when he said that progress was "a beneficent necessity" and that the ultimate development of the ideal man is "logically certain." This is the old escalator theory of progress. Tennyson had it when he sang of "one increasing purpose" which through the ages runs. But evolution is not automatic. History reveals progress and recession.

There is no such easy assured highway to our dreams as we sentimentally imagined a few years back. We cannot sit down and leave it to God. If we get a good world we shall have to fight for it, and it will come by the laws of growth operating in a favorable social environment and not because it was decreed in the beginning. Just as heaven would be hell to one who does not love virtue, so a perfect world as a free gift of an indulgent God would be a prison house for our restless, battling souls. What we want is not an Eden with its safe and unmerited innocence but a city of God whose scarred battlements testify to the struggle by which it was won from the relentless forces of an evil world.

It is for the above reason that we are led to believe that a great deal of our present "crisis theology" is untenable. It does credit neither to God nor to man. It comes to our attention in two forms. The cruder type with the touch of messianism represents the conservative wing of thought. It denies the fundamental principle of a world which is gradually growing better and centers attention upon a crisis in the future. Man's efforts at improving conditions are well meant but ineffectual. The world is bad and not getting better at a rapid rate. Antichrists of various and awesome types are to be discovered abroad, and the rumblings of war and the unusual sweep of pestilence all point to "the day of the Lord." We are not so much concerned just now with the fantastic exegesis

by which these calamitous millenniums of woe are wrested from and proved by the Scriptures. The tragedy of it all is that once this shift of responsibility from human to divine shoulders takes place it undercuts man's place in the universe and makes him a helpless observer rather than a participant in the struggle for a better world. It is a flat denial of God's way of building a godlike universe. It controverts every principle of growth heretofore discovered and makes of life what Walter Lippman sardonically calls it, "comedy, or high tragedy, or plain farce." If all the future holds for us is a divine intervention which shall right the blunders of creation, snatch from defeat the principles for which Jesus died, and do for us what even with the grace of God we could not do for ourselves, then we are headed for a fool's paradise. God becomes a vast cosmic Santa Claus and the redeemed a lot of simple-minded juveniles who have faithfully gone to sleep so they could be ready for "the Lord's return." This is neither sound sense nor good theology.

But we must also be aware of a more subtle approach to this problem. In our reaction against a too idealistic view of human nature we must not swing to the extreme Calvinistic sovereignty idea and lose from our daily living the present available God who is "the all-important reality upon which we depend at every moment of our lives and to which all the good in us is a response." Undoubtedly the hour had

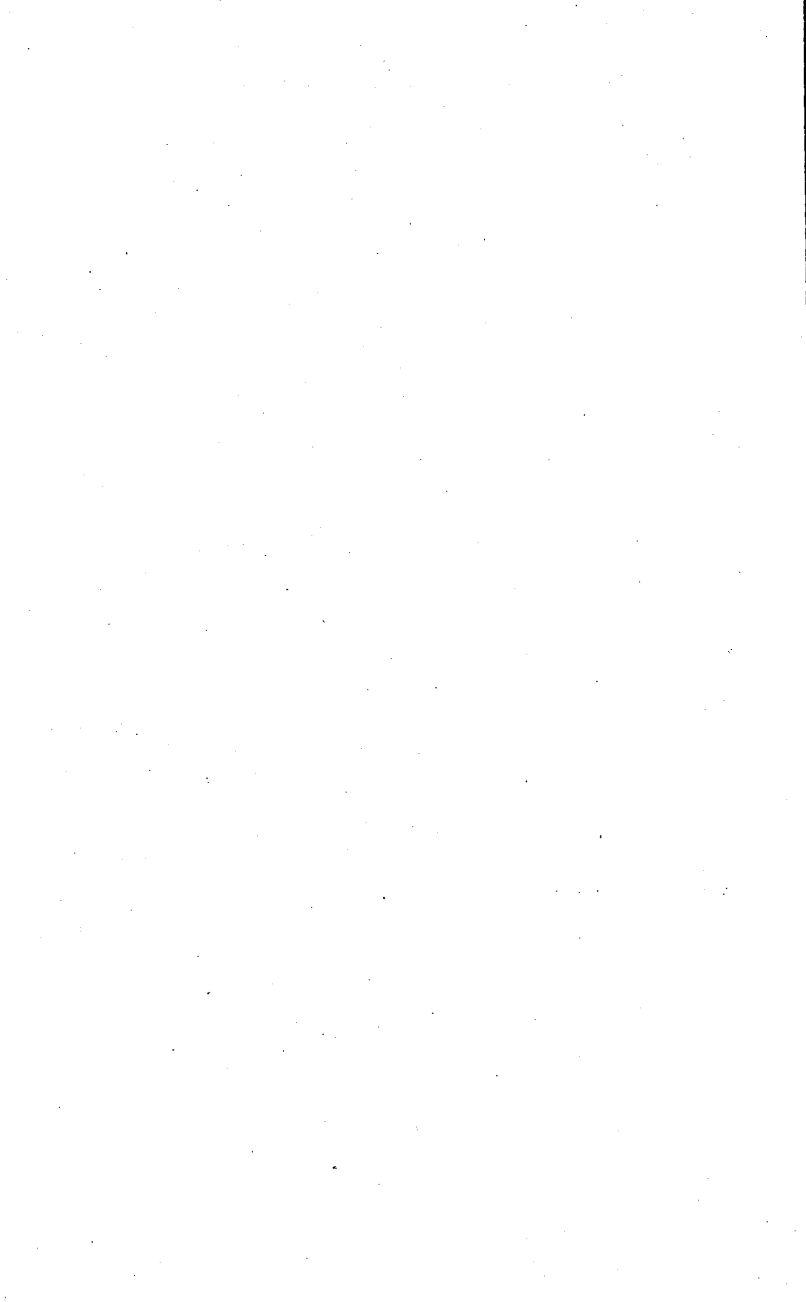
struck for Karl Barth's "bomb on the playground of the theologians." He has called us back from many of the agreeable but fallacious conclusions of our natural theology. Undoubtedly every thoughtful preacher must reckon with this intellectual giant from post-war Germany. But in rejecting as Barth does the philosophical doctrine of the divine immanence as the arch heresy of the modern world we reject "the one vital way that the modern mind has of conceiving the relation of God to the world." And with this gone there follows also the collapse of our whole conception of a growing universe in which free men labor side by side with an omnipotent but immanent Deity whose will is life abundant and whose law is love in action.

And so we cannot surrender our faith in the ultimate triumph of good and the gradual overthrow of evil. This is not the best possible world but it is a better world than it used to be, and mankind and God intend that it shall be an increasingly good world. We may not nonchalantly sing, "God's in his heaven and all's right with the world," but neither shall we take counsel of our despair and betray the high hopes of humanity by forgetting the sacrifice of the martyr and the dream of the prophet and the poet.

Far back in the dim beginnings God set his hand to this task of building a universe that should eventuate at last in godlike personalities. Slowly we have

climbed together out of the lower levels of the primitive and the bestial into the higher orders of intelligence and good will. We have moved forward not solely by any force or power within us nor because we have always desired to leave our old and outworn ways. But a Power not ourselves has laid hold upon us. We are being molded into a higher pattern. The meaning of this universe can be understood only in terms of progress, in advance toward the good and the beautiful and the true. And this Power moving in us and thrusting us with enduring energy and unyielding purpose toward celestial goals whose splendor will not grow dim even when we turn away from them, this Power is of God. He hath hidden eternity in our hearts and set our feet on the climbing stairway from earth to heaven. Earth's sorrow must pass, man's weakness turn to strength, and God's dream come true.

"The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in
the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the
bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it
by and by."



FAITH AND THE ULTIMATE GOOD



Faith and the Ultimate Good

ONE of the awe-inspiring scenes of human history carries us for its setting into the plains of North Africa in the spring of A.D. 430. The Vandal hordes under the conquering leadership of Genseric had laid waste large sections of the Roman Empire. They were now conquering the fertile plains of Numidia. Boniface had resisted in vain their fury and the Vandal had forced his enemy into the walled city of Hippo. Into this city had come some years before a priest who was to assume the spiritual guardianship of the city under the designation of the Bishop of Hippo. This man, Augustine, had played a colorful and significant role in the Roman life of his day. We picture him now standing on a hill in Hippo looking out on an encircling ring of enemies crouched at the city walls. Beyond them in imagination he could see the fire and sword of those Germanic tribes that had ravaged and pillaged their way into the very heart of the "eternal city." For Augustine life holds

but a few days. The weight of his seventy-six years presses upon him. In the bare room of his monastery, with the penitential psalms writ large before his eyes, he is about to close in peaceful resignation this earthly scene.

What does this impractical prophet of the ideal think now of his grand dream of a City of God "coming down out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband"? While the Roman Empire was crashing to its doom and the city of men was being destroyed by the inner enemies of lust and avarice, this seer of the Middle Ages looks beyond the temporal into the eternal, beyond the evanescence of the material into the permanence of the spiritual. He dares to throw out upon the sodden realism of his day the deathless grandeur of a dream city "whose builder and maker is God."

The setting has changed. The Vandal and the Moor are gone. Hippo is a memory. Medieval Rome lingers on only in marble nave and Gothic spire, too beautiful to suffer the defeat of her decaying imperialism. But the vision of the prophet and the insight of the idealist has kept men in every succeeding generation building cities of God over the ruins of the cities of men.

"Say never more

That dreams are fragile things. What else endures
Of all this broken world save only dreams?"

I

The major conflict in the modern world is in the realm of ideas. It is a conflict between realism and idealism, between the immediate and the ultimate, the transitory and the abiding, opportunism and statesmanship, ecclesiasticism and prophetism, the philosophy of secularism and the dream of a spiritual universe. Here is the real battle line on which the outcome of our civilization will be determined. It is true that most of the average citizenship with whom we come in contact is blandly unaware of the raging alternative with which the age is confronted. They are so deeply immersed in the sea of the contemporaneous and the sensual that they are not disturbed by any rumblings of "sense at war with soul." A naturalistic, Epicurean philosophy effectively walls them off from any consciousness of an inner struggle or the threat of a social disaster.

This type has always been found in every age. They have preferred to live in Sodom and enjoy the pleasures of this life for a season and take their chances of escaping the conflagration. But probably in no modern era has this group been so vividly and so generally present as in the post-war decades now happily, let us hope, drawing to a close. Their round of interests may easily be discovered and to stimulate and gratify this clamorous obsession for things becomes the major adventure in commercial exploita-

tion. These people live in a world of radios, autos, movies, cosmetics, funny papers, sport pages, bridge, electric refrigerators, fur coats, swim suits, cocktail parties, hotel lobbies, frozen salads, aspirin, and silk lingerie. Outwardly it is a glamorous existence, in reality it is a tiresome weariness to the flesh and a crucifixion of the spirit.

At the very opposite extreme of the social level there is another class who no less fatefully are caught in the grip of "things." Their plight is one for which they are not wholly to blame. Our faulty economic system and our heartless greed have compelled multitudes of our fellow-men to live in a world bounded by the most bitter and naked realism. They must have bread before they can be interested in ideals. They are so busy keeping the wind and rain out of their shanties that they can open no windows toward heaven. They must burrow like worms into the earth to dig coal for other homes and distant industries, and all the while have no surplus or security that offers them a real hearthstone of their own. To keep their children fed and clothed must suffice in place of an education and a chance at the higher life. From the thin soil of the hillside farm they wrest a scanty living, but they are too weary and overborne to lift their eyes unto the hills and watch heaven stoop and touch earth when the clouds circle the mountain tops and the sun sinks with a flaming ray. Strange, ragged fellow-prisoners with the sur-

feited rich, enslaved alike by the tyranny of a pagan, secularized realism.

In both of these groups there is discernible today a ground swell of restlessness. While we shall always have the worldling with us, the fact remains that he is not so complacent today as he was a few years ago. The jazz age is dying. The world is no longer a grand pleasure resort. The depression robbed our play-boy generation of the means with which to make "whoopee," and being out of a job, with the dole in the offing, is an effective spur to a more serious mood. And then the old moralities have been quietly re-asserting themselves. We cannot run our banks with crooks or our governments with birds of prey. The worm does finally turn; the wheels of the gods grind slowly but they grind, and an ancient law, cynically forgotten, does still insist that men reap exactly what they sow. But Pan and Euterpe are not dead; they are only waiting for a more auspicious moment to re-assert their lordship of the light-hearted.

This movement of the proletariat, however, has much more ominous lines to its raging sweep. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. The downtrodden, underprivileged classes are on the march. They have become class conscious. All the pent-up anger and indignation of centuries of oppression and suppression are bursting forth in red violence. The underdog is not content to remain under any longer. The masses demand not only a

chance to work but a chance at leisure, not only bread but roses. "The man with the hoe" is now the man with a gun. Humanity is being uprooted again because it persistently refuses to be content to live on bread alone.

It is interesting and enlightening to observe that this mass uprising has about it all the marks of a religious movement. They are out to achieve "salvation." Russia is a conspicuous illustration of this phenomenon. She did away with the old bourgeois state and the corrupt Greek Orthodox Church not because she was fundamentally irreligious but rather because she had found a new religion, a new "salvation." In the light of her background, communism was better than the church and Lenin was more to her liking than Jesus Christ. There is about this whole communistic uprising a fanatical religious enthusiasm. It was not the economic theories of Karl Marx which they grasped so eagerly. It was the Marx in whose heart there burned the fire of a prophet, who seeing a new day for the downtrodden and forgotten masses marshaled their loyalties and set their feet on the highway to a new messianic deliverance. Sherwood Eddy tells of asking a former prince of the old Czarist regime why he could be content, in view of his past special privileges, to work for the Soviet for a monthly sum less than an unskilled workman would receive every day in an American factory. His reply was, "What satisfaction can

the amassing of money or mere private profit give? Why should such an ignoble pursuit ever interest us? We are building not only a new Russia but a new world." The same revolution is on in Mexico and is rapidly approaching in China and Japan and many parts of Europe.

II

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, in his recent Hibbert lectures, has traced the rise of realism in the nineteenth century to the philosophy of Hegel. He was the first to formulate the theory of rationalism. Schweitzer thinks that when in 1820 Hegel wrote this sentence, "What is reasonable is real, and what is real is reasonable," he laid the philosophic base for modern realism and created the theory of the modern era which ended in the World War. Progress was automatic in the natural course of events. The passions and ambitions of ruling monarchs were all in the service of progress. Once a course of action could be rationalized it became real and imperative. Ethical idealism had no place in a scheme of things made to serve the ambitions of those to whom power had been intrusted by the gods. How blindly this worship of the realistic as against the idealistic had been followed may be inferred when almost a hundred years after Hegel another German, none other than Rudolph Eucken, declared in defense of "Deutschland Uber Alles": "In this sense we have a right to say

that we form the soul of humanity and that the destruction of German nature would rob world history of its deepest meaning." In reality no racial culture or nationalistic state is indispensable. History rests on a deeper foundation. When the spiritual masters and molds the real we have progress; when the real overcomes and controls the life of men we slip back toward the level of the brute.

All history is the record of the play of these two forces, the spirit of idealism and the spirit of realism. The spirit of idealism means that men think out and live out certain ethical norms of conduct and transform realistic conditions with these ideal concepts. Then progress becomes conceivable. But when men become tired of ethical thinking and accept the world as it is and believe that no one need concern himself with what is happening, and that no effort of man can bring in goodness and social virtue, then we have realism, heartless, hopeless, and devastating. Out of the matrix of this surrender to the philosophy of *laissez faire* comes the theory of the divine right of kings, the doctrine that the voice of the people is the voice of God, and our recent sentimental idea that piratical capitalism, tempered and made respectable by philanthropy, is ordained of the Almighty for the good of mankind. No wonder a voice is heard in the land crying out for a return to "Coolidge prosperity" and the happy days of "normalcy." Those were the

days when things were in the saddle and whirl was king.

What has all this conflict in the realm of ideas to do with Jesus? A Galilean prophet living a simple life in the long long ago, how could he affect this fundamental, decisive question which confronts our generation? Of course, there are many who will tell you that he can make no contribution. On the other hand the number is steadily mounting who believe that this man has an answer. Call it what you may, "revelation," "divinity," "superman," there is about the Man of Galilee a qualitative perfection of life and a depth of insight that are at once not only unique in manifestation but universal in applicability. When from the angle of our own personal struggles we contemplate Jesus and his inward idealism we are not, strange to say, driven to despair, but incited to a breathless effort to be like him. Is it not possible therefore that the secret of his power is not some extraneous, exceptional overplus of divine energy and wisdom, but rather that his earthly life was set in those cosmic currents of spiritual energy which move toward righteousness and which were available not alone for him in the first century but are for us also in every century? In other words, the universe authenticated him because he caught its secret and dared to live it. Just as truly will the universe validate us when once we are wise enough to trust its inmost principle. If the stars in their courses fight

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against error and iniquity and ugliness, it must also be that the secret might of this cosmic order is on the side of truth and goodness and beauty.

"Who sets his feet on law's firm track
The universe is at his back."

The secret of Jesus' life is found in his faith in the power of the ideal as over against the real. He definitely believed in the spirit of idealism and used it continually to control the realistic situations with which he was confronted. To most of us idealism is a hypothetical dream world from which flashes may, in moments of high inspiration, break upon our daily, matter-of-fact routine. But to think of it as a power, as a constantly available medium of victory in hours of conflict, this conception of the ideal is foreign to most of our calculations. To Jesus, on the other hand, idealism was the most real fact in the universe. He lived in it, died in it, conquered in it. It is the philosophic basis for his faith, and it was that faith which was the victory that overcame the world.

It may be a bit difficult to analyze the seamless robe of this flawless life, but I do want to make clear how this idealistic attitude became the very warp and woof of the pattern of his days. Let us look at some of the problems Jesus faced. First of all, there was the problem of sustaining life. For the early years of his manhood he was a carpenter. But the

time came when he laid aside his workman's apron and tools just as naturally as he had taken them up years before. The new movement was calling him. How could he be supported? From whence would come his daily bread? Who would clothe and shelter him? These are the questions that press on us daily and demand an answer, and that answer absorbs the greater part of our energy. Jesus said the workman was worthy of his hire; his heavenly Father knew what things he needed; he would take no anxious thought about material things, believing that if he sought first the Kingdom of God everything needful would be his. And it was so. All his elemental needs were met. He might not have any place to lay his head, but he had a hundred shelters in the hearts of his friends, and today he is the unseen guest who lends radiance to a million Christian homes. In death he might have no sepulcher save a borrowed tomb, but his name is written in graven stone and in victorious assurance over the sleeping places of multitudes of those who in Christ have been made alive. All of which is a way of saying that Jesus refused to subordinate his confidence in the spiritual forces of goodness behind the outward forms of life and trusting them found them ample and dependable.

If this seems to us to be utterly foolish and impracticable let us not fail to observe that it can be no more insane than doing the reverse, subordinating the spiritual to the material. The man who built bigger

barns did that; Dives did that; Judas Iscariot did that. Did it pay? Does it pay today? Who loves a grasping, selfish, unspiritual millionaire? It is still hard, desperately hard, for a rich man to enter into any kind of a kingdom except the kingdom of his wealth. That is a poor paradise. We cannot serve God and mammon. If the poverty of Jesus' life seems to us impossible, equally so does the surfeit of our life seem to him to be empty and misguided. Here it is: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The alternative is that a man's life consists in the integrity of the ideals which possess him.

Or take another of the problems confronting Jesus. What should be his attitude to the dominant institutions of his day—Pharisaism, the temple, the law, for example? How should he deal with them, in the spirit of realism or as an idealist? Our answer under similar circumstances would be quickly forthcoming: "You've got to take things as you find them. The religious leaders have prestige and they mean well; maybe we could use them in our movement, at least in its early, formative stages." So runs the realism of ecclesiastical strategy as we know it. But Jesus would have no such blind subservience. Ideas that were morally incompatible could never be congenially integrated into his program. The seeds of death ("whited sepulchers") were in this scribal legalism. He could not compro-

mise with it, and so he fought it and they fought him, and Caiaphas was greater than Jesus, and the priests and the multitude cried, "Crucify him." And they did crucify him. But what has happened in these years? Who was right, the Pharisees or Jesus? What does history say? Pharisaism is a dead and empty shell left stranded on the shores of history. Spiritual religion, the idealism of Jesus, dominated the field, and if humanity ever lays hold of religion it will reckon with Jesus and not his religious antagonists.

We press the embarrassing inquiry to a final point. How should he safeguard his own life? He was ringed about with enemies. "And they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him." The odds were all against him. When "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" he must have known that the cross lay there athwart his path. He could have escaped from it. He gave to Pilate the power by which Pilate condemned him. He kept his legions of angels in leash. He answered not a word. He ridiculed the weapons they carried to take an unarmed and unresisting man. He ordered Peter to put up his sword. What was his strategy? Was he forlorn and helpless in the hands of his enemies? Never. Against their pitiful physical force he pitted the strength of his moral will. No man could take his life, but he would surrender it freely. Ideals were dragged in the mire of men's hatred that day, but out

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of that mire and muck of defeat there arose an "old rugged cross" which is forever the seal of victory in the heart of humanity.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er *the wrecks of time.*"

We still deny this philosophy of living. We chatter about "self-preservation being the first law of life" and "a man must live" and "all that a man hath he will give for his life," and they are lies and in our better moments we know they are lies.

"A man must live?

There is no falser, cheaper word that can be said,
No more malign mirage that has been bannered!
A man must live? There is a cross against the sky
That blazons forth—'A man must die!'"

Only the survival of ideals makes this world a decent place in which to live. If there is nothing in life worth dying for there is nothing left in life worth living for. Judas was never so honorable as in his death. Jesus was right; Pilate was wrong. History's final judgment is that if Christ had saved himself he could not have saved others and that when he laid down his life he made it possible for every man everywhere in all ages to take up life afresh through his redeeming power. Emerson puts it thus: "The lesson of life is to believe what the years and the centuries say as against the hours."

III

This principle is so central in any effort to validate religion that I am tempted to explore its workings further in the pages of the New Testament. Take this idea of devotion to the ideal and put it up against the harshest and most relentless fury of the mob mind of this world. John the Baptist chose loyalty to the truth rather than safety and subservience. He was beheaded but his place in history is secure because of Jesus' encomium: "There is none greater than John." Or take Stephen, brilliant apologist for the unpopular and heretical doctrine of the cross. They set upon him and stoned him, but he looked into the eternities and beheld the face of Jesus. There was standing on the edge of the crowd a greater than Stephen. Into his sensitive, troubled spirit that day came plunging a new ideal destined to transform Saul of Tarsus and remake the Graeco-Roman world of the first century. James Anthony Froude, writing after a lifetime spent in studying history, states the facts impressively: "History is a voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall. But the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. . . . Justice and truth alone endure. . . . One lesson and only one history may be said to repeat with distinctness—our world is somehow built on moral foundations. In the long run it is well with the good, and ill with the wicked."

Do you remember those noble and profound words with which the eleventh chapter of Hebrews opens? They are brave words because they were written in the midst of a crashing world when idealism was in eclipse. Hear him as he sings: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." And then, as though he would authenticate in flesh and blood this daring insight into the heart of reality, he catalogues the spiritual pathfinders of history, of whom the world was not worthy, but of whom he could triumphantly declare: "God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Wherein lay the differentiating marks of that first century band of Christian believers? In what way were they different from their pagan environment? Their distinguishing badge was surely not superior intelligence or social standing. They outlived their generation. They chose to bet their lives on the reality of "the things that are not seen." They dared to trust love as against might, forgiveness as against hate, sharing as against holding, brotherhood as against racial snobishness, virtue as against vice; service to God as against servility to earthly rulers. These are the men that turned the world upside down because it was wrong side up. With a zeal unparalleled and a devotion unmatched they threw down their gauntlet of faith to an evil and adulterous generation. They "received not the promise" because their battle

could not be won without us. But they did discover for all time "a kingdom that cannot be shaken"; and in the midst of this unstable tottering world structure that kingdom still stands and beckons those who dare to live for the ideal as against the real. This is what makes them Christians, followers in the way of Christ, and it is still the badge and seal of all who would be his disciples.

We are always tempted to believe that a principle exemplified in the New Testament has about it a kind of "otherworldly" character that makes it inoperative in our practical, matter-of-fact world. But in reality no New Testament principle could survive, or even be of more than passing interest, unless it struck its roots down into the very soil of the moral order. A way of living is not true and mandatory because it is in the Bible. It is in the Bible because it is true and ethically imperative. The authority of the Bible rests at last upon the measure in which its characters and its ideals portray harmony with the fundamental moral universe in which we live. Jesus would have died and the Christian epic of the first century would have been forgotten had it not turned out to be a revelation in time of an unchanging structural moral order which is as eternal as life itself. Therefore all along the pages of history we shall seek for and discover men and women who have dared to live and die for this ideal world, visible to the sixth sense of the soul, the in-

sight of faith. Let us scan the centuries for the elegies of the pioneers of the spirit who endured as seeing God and a world beyond and behind this world of flesh and things.

Seldom have I been so moved as when I stood in the amphitheater of Rome. Preserved to a surprising degree in its original form, it easily induces the imaginative leap to the golden, glamorous days of the Caesars, when a ribald multitude taunted helpless Christians as they were thrown to the Numidian lions to make a holiday spectacle for the populace. Rome would annihilate every kingdom save her empire; Caesar would brook no King of kings. But the centuries have not been with the Caesars. Out of the sodden red sand of the arena there came a judgment of God against Rome: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Who is this man on horseback with his face toward the wilderness? Why did you leave your home in England to explore and convert these frontiers? Do you ever sigh for a home and the merry laughter of little children in the warmth of your own fireside? Why do you not settle down in the more comfortable regions of New England and why do you choose the swamps of South Carolina and the unbeaten trails of the Holston hills? Why will you waste your genius on illiterate, boisterous backwoods folk who left God behind when they pitched their tents on the edge of the wilderness? Answer me, Francis Asbury,

in God's name tell us. Hear the stern old itinerant as he replies: "In this labor, we have to encounter hunger, heat, and many restless nights with mosquitoes, unwholesome provisions, and bad water; but all this is for souls; were it for silver, I would require a great sum."

It was in the closing days of the Cleveland administration. The war-hawks and the profiteers were howling for the conflict with Spain. Fair Cuba must be rescued from the tyrant and her injustice be avenged "at the point of the bayonet and the mouth of the cannon." But there was one major obstacle to their self-righteous altruism, and that was the sturdy conscience of Mr. Cleveland himself. Repudiated by his own party as well as by the nation, deluged with abuse and derision from every quarter, his influence at an end and his hopes betrayed, Mr. Cleveland was still President and the master of his soul. One Sunday afternoon a group of Congressmen waited upon him: "They said: 'We have about decided to declare war against Spain.' . . . Mr. Cleveland drew himself up and said: 'There will be no war with Spain over Cuba while I am President.' One of the members flushed up and said angrily: 'Mr. President, you seem to forget that the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the right to declare war.' He answered: 'Yes, but it also makes me the Commander-in-Chief, and I will not mobilize the army. I happen to know that we can buy the

Island of Cuba from Spain for \$100,000,000 and a war will cost vastly more than that. . . . It would be an outrage to declare war.' ” We did finally go to war. We saved Cuba for the sugar barons and the Platt amendment and brought into the American household a lot of Filipino stepchildren. But the wisdom of Mr. Cleveland grows clearer with the passing of the years and we long for his like again in the White House.

Admiral Grayson has recently written his memories of Woodrow Wilson. He cherishes most the recollection of “the greatest speech the world ever heard.” “It was delivered by the American President at an exciting session of the Council of Four at Paris. It was provoked by a sharp dispute with Clemenceau over the terms to be offered Germany. Slipping in and out of the room, Admiral Grayson was the only outsider present. Mr. Wilson was begging for a severe but a just peace. He recalled the rivalry and revengeful feelings which flowed from Germany’s insistence upon stripping Alsace-Lorraine from France. He predicted that world sentiment would swing to Germany if the Allies were too greedy, too ruthless. Clemenceau could endure such reminders no longer. Leaping up he cried: ‘Mr. President, you have a heart of steel!’ ‘Yes,’ replied Wilson through gritted teeth, ‘but I haven’t the heart to steal.’ Then the American President uttered a plea for a lasting peace, for a settlement that would

bless rather than bruise children yet unborn. 'During that speech,' continued Admiral Grayson, 'Clemenceau arose to protest. But the President said, 'Sit down!' And when he said, 'Sit down!' in that hard, Scotch voice, you sat! Clemenceau did! As Mr. Wilson went on, he moved his hearers visibly. Orlando walked to the window, and wiped his face with his handkerchief. Lloyd George's eyes grew dim. Finally, trembling and tears in his eyes too, Clemenceau got up. 'Mr. President,' he said. 'Please stop. You are right. Clemenceau knows when he is wrong. You are not only a great man but a good one.' " President Wilson sought a stable world resting on good will and mutual respect, governed by reason and not by greed. The ideal sounded strange even to a war-torn world fed up on slaughter and rapine. But Clemenceau and Lloyd George must have their pound of flesh. Germany must be humiliated and stripped. The ideal was compromised. The Treaty of Versailles was the implicit denial of the principles of the League of Nations. Wilson was repudiated by his own country and the lonely man in the S Street home became the martyr of a lost cause. What has happened? The League of Nations has had hard going during the post-war years. But the Treaty of Versailles had had an even harder road. And all that he said about Germany is now a matter of fact and history. Write hatred into a peace treaty and a succeeding generation will seek

revenge. Write justice and good will into an instrument and the conscience of the world will become its defender and guarantor. One by one the old military heroes of the Great War depart for their national Valhallas. "Their bones are dust, their swords are rust" but forever alive, born anew in every generation, is the deathless ideal of world peace founded on national integrities and universal good will. Wars belong to the past; peace belongs to the future. "Eternity makes little reckoning of results in comparison with tendency."

I have made reference in another connection to William Jennings Bryan. I can never forget the first time I heard him speak. His rich modulated voice carried his message into my youthful heart. The closing period of his oration has lingered with me over more than a quarter of a century. "Let us have faith in the wisdom of doing right." The wisdom of doing right. Into these words are packed a philosophy of history little heeded but destined at last to prove itself the only dependable basis of a stable world order.

There are they "whom a dream hath possessed." What shall I more say? for time will fail me if I tell of Socrates, Francis of Assisi, Savonarola, Huss, Latimer, Luther, Wesley, Knox, Morrison, Cox, Taylor, Lincoln, Cavell, Gandhi, Schweitzer, Grenfell, who through faith subdued the kingdoms of an invisible realm, became the signposts on the highways of the

countries, the sentinels of God on the ramparts of progress.

Here we must pause to ask a searching question. Are all these men and women who form what Josiah Royce used to call the "Beloved Community," are they anomalies in the order of life? Are they like meteors that sweep across the ordered heavens, God-intoxicated souls who have no place in the scheme of things? Or are they the embodiment of a fundamental philosophy of life that can be charted, authenticated, and followed? The true Christian has always seemed a strange individual to his own generation. Jesus was an uncomfortable problem to the men of his day. The early disciples were strange fellows who nonplussed their worldly contemporaries. And we have continued to class the true followers of Jesus in every age with the haloed idealists who live among the stars and have no real place in a practical, realistic world. But do they belong in that category? May it not be that the ideal is at last the real and that these men who will not consent to the actual but insist on living by faith in the ideal are the true interpreters of life, not the world's dreamy-eyed "fools" but the far-seeing realists who live with the substance of things and not the shadows?

W. P. Montague in his striking *Belief Unbound* clearly faces and accepts this possibility. Quietly sensing that religion may be merely "wish thinking,"

that the answer that comes to us out of the universe may be but "man's own cry mockingly echoed back to him by the encompassing void," he posits another answer. And that answer has in it Jesus' whole philosophy of life and is gloriously authenticated by his own person. "Religion as we shall conceive it is the acceptance neither of a primitive absurdity, nor of a sophisticated truism, but of a momentous possibility—the possibility, namely, *that what is highest in spirit is also deepest in nature*, that the ideal and the real are at least to some extent identified not merely evanescently in our own lives but enduringly in the universe itself. If this possibility were an actuality, if there truly were at the heart of nature something akin to us, a conserver and increaser of values, and if we could not only know this and act upon it but really feel it, life would suddenly become radiant. For no longer should we be alien accidents in an indifferent world, . . . and no longer would the things that matter most be at the mercy of the things that matter least." This is the true Christian philosophy of life. Facing life at its worst Jesus cried, "I have overcome the world." Paul, confronted by the mystery of evil and sorrow and disappointment, clarified forth the most profound affirmation of the Christian faith: "To those who love God, all things work together for good." No combination of evil, no machination of demons, no calamity of things present or things to come could separate the

Christian from his triumph in and through Christ. He who does the will of God is safe in the heart of the universe.

IV

May I dare in closing to bring to the bar of this Christian principle some contemporaneous questions which press upon the Christian conscience? How far do we dare to trust this ideal of faith, to free ourselves from the thralldom of the expedient and the temporary? This is the practical question before the Christian world. Debates on theological shades of opinion pale into triviality by the side of the major issue, Do we dare to live for the ideal and face the results? "Faith is not belief in spite of evidence; it is life in scorn of consequence." But how resolute is the Christian minority today in facing those consequences?

Take as a starter the question of our economic and social order today. By no stretch of generosity could it be called Christian. Our modern society is acquisitive and competitive. Selfishness is largely the motive and strife is the method in industry and government alike. How far right is Dr. A. E. Garvie when he claims that "the present situation is not only a crisis in the current sense, as a turning point in human history, when the future of mankind hangs in the balance for progress or disaster; but is also a crisis in the original sense of the Greek word, a judgment of

God, when the ways and works of the modern world are on trial before the tribunal of his purpose for mankind?" Our capitalistic order has not proved itself socially worthy. There is much that can be said for its efficient method of creating and merchandising its products but its human resultant is less convincing. It has made a few rich and left a multitude in poverty. It has had little interest in the human factor in production, distribution, and consumption. The conviction is steadily growing that capitalism, as we know it in America, is doomed. Some system must take its place, it is contended, that will more justly meet the crying needs of human beings for a fuller and richer life.

Our Christian gospel, institutionalized in the church, is fairly well tied up with the present economic order. To a degree we hesitate to admit, it supports our institutions, makes possible our missionary operations, and supplies the "sinews of war" to many a local congregation. The question now is, how free are we to proclaim a Christian ideal of society? Can we summon our capitalistic leaders to the bar of God's judgment and escape the consequences? Or shall we merely let the wheat and the tares grow on together for a while and hope for the best? Must we insist upon a consideration of the ethical basis of our present social order and its adherence to the principles of the Christian revelation? Is the church to become a mendicant or a missionary

in this economic era? Is her pulpit to be vaguely complacent, committed to the *status quo*, or is it to be cuttingly authoritative, committed to the Christian ideal? Upon the answer to that embarrassing question will depend the church's right to continue as the interpreter of the gospel of justice and love and righteousness as these are preached by Jesus. Once again it is clear that our safety is with the combat troops and not with the home guard.

Or take the question of war. The rising tide of opposition to armed conflict is encouraging. How substantial this opposition would be in the event of an actual war situation no one can say. But the question is thrusting itself more and more into the forefront of our thinking. What shall the Christian do when his country goes to war? Are there any wars that can be blessed? Is the business of killing men *en masse* essentially different from killing them individually? Are the promises made to youth who fight for "God and country" ever sacredly kept after the war is over? Does any combatant ever really win a war, or do all the nations lose the victory? Is war sin? Is the position of the conscientious objector Christian? Is it the only Christian position? If it is Christian, is it mandatory on all true Christians? These and a multitude of other questions are before the Christian public today and will remain until they are answered in the light of the ultimate truth. Surely we can all follow Bishop McConnell when he says:

"If we are ever to conquer the war spirit, we have to get the churches out of the business of blessing war. I do not think there can be the slightest doubt that the blessing of the World War by the churches is in large degree responsible for the attitude toward Christianity of the generation since the war. I was near enough to the World War to hear what soldiers said. One expressed it to me thus: 'Better call off Christianity until the war is over.' "

But no merely negative attitude will conquer this evil. The evidence is thunderously accumulative that war can never be harmonized with the spirit of Christ. It is a denial of his principle of love, it is for the Christian a denial of Christ and to deny Christ is to betray him into the hands of his enemies. Only as we dare to commit our lives, even unto imprisonment and death, to the integrity of Jesus' way of conquest shall we see the end of this mania that has cursed the centuries. Truth has a way of being in small minorities, and the only time it ever found perfect embodiment on the earth it was in a minority of one against the world.

Our failure in these realms is the explanation of the lack of impressiveness that characterize our preaching. Men pay but little heed to us because we talk the language of the day rather than of all the days; because our deliverances are adjusted to a consideration of "the world as it actually is" rather than

as it ought to be by the grace of God. Because we fail to buttress our messages with the ultimate, idealistic world ground of truth, no man falls to his knees crying for mercy and the generation to which we preach is strangely content to go on without God in all its reckonings. Our only hope is in more, not less, of Christian idealism. No major battle is ever won by compromise and expediency. When the Christian church dares to take its courage again in its hand and proclaims the divisive, disrupting, uprooting, revolutionary gospel which fell from the lips and was perfectly patterned in the life of its founder, then will come again "the day of the Lord" and the ideal shall have been proved to be God's ultimate real.

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."

COMMUNION AND THE DISCOVERY OF GOD



Communion and the Discovery of God

OF all the quests which drive forward the human spirit none equals in intensity or persistence the search after God. We may be finite, we may be frail children of the dust, and we may at times be recreant to the voices of the Spirit, but still a restlessness disturbs our innermost beings until we reach some comprehension of that ultimate and intimate Reality which men call God. Let no one think that the overwhelming surge of this materialistic age can drown out the impulse after the Eternal. "O that I knew where I might find Him," cried the anxious searcher of ancient days. Our modern cry may be less vocal but it is none the less importunate and wistful. This is no philosophical search after an abstract theism; it is the pathetic heart hunger of a generation searching for spiritual sustenance. Rufus Jones tells of a little child who was being put to bed by her mother. As the mother gave her a good-night kiss and turned out the lights and started for the door,

the little one suddenly realized her lonely plight. "Am I to be left all alone, and in the dark, too?" she anxiously asked. "Yes, my dear," the mother said, "but you know you have God with you all the time." "Yes, I know God is here," the child answered, "but I want someone who has a face." And that is the instinctive wistful cry of us all. We do know in the abstract that God is here, that he is Mind and Spirit and Purpose, but we need to make the sense of God real and vivid and personal. We can have no commerce with an Abstraction; we long for the touch of a real Person upon our individual lives and our personal destinies.

The modern humanist has been telling us that we can get along pretty well without God. One of humanism's notable exponents has recently concluded, "The belief in God and the belief in immortality are gone." Disciples of this school hold that not only has God gone but he never was necessary. He was the product of emotional wish-thinking. The abandonment of the acceptance of any supernatural force in the universe carries with it the elimination of the Deity. The humanist girds himself courageously to face an intolerably ruthless universe and assumes that without aid from above he can wrest from the natural order spiritual values and discover incentives to unselfish living. This turns out in practical experience to be what Fosdick calls "a tentative makeshift." For the humanist must have his theory of the cosmos,

and the logic of that theory turns upon him at last and forces him into a position which is a denial of the very values he would seek to magnify. If he denies that the universe is personal and theistic, he implies that it is impersonal and mechanistic. The universe is quantitative, not qualitative, he insists. All that we call art, beauty, spiritual aspiration, fellowship with God, is only a projection of the subjective imagination, and has no realistic place in a purposeless world that is by its very nature indifferent to its artists and scornful of its dreamers. According to this view human history will prove to have been "a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest planets." But God is not got rid of so jauntily. For when we lose him we lose our finest selves. Personality has no meaning in a mechanistic world. To posit a godless universe and then seek to build a good life into such a cosmic framework is not only moral suicide but also intellectual stupidity. Such a philosophy produces not beauty but ugliness, not courage but despair, not men but robots.

Thus our search for a God whom we may know, with whom we may come in vivifying contact, and who in turn will know us and find within us the priceless possibilities of radiant personalities—this becomes the ardent and unrelenting passion of our days. Man cannot live by bread, by raiment, by shelter, by money. He will turn from these lesser things to the eternal hungers of his spirit, and discover his true life

THE BASIC BELIEFS OF JESUS

in a fellowship which has been made gloriously winsome by the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

I

The chief contribution which Jesus has made to human knowledge and happiness is his revelation of God. Our tendency to worship Jesus has not infrequently dimmed our understanding of a far more fundamental demand, our duty to know and worship God. Jesus is the Revealer of God, not the substitute for God. "The Father hath sent me"; "I do the works of my Father"; "Have I been so long time with you and yet dost thou say, Show us the Father?" All these and a host of other similar passages reveal that the concern of Jesus was to lead men to the discovery and appropriation of God, of which he was the incarnate and supreme manifestation. While it may be true that we can never understand God until we see him in Jesus, it is equally true that we can never understand Jesus until we see him in his relation to God. For was it not God that was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself? We must not substitute the process for the end, nor the Son for the Father.

Here lies the explanation of the pious shallowness of a great deal of our present-day religious thinking. We exalt Christ and at the same moment dishonor him by refusing to go beyond him to that everlast-

ing divine process of redemption which begins in the heart of God and expresses itself not only in a cross on Calvary's hill, but in a million crosses forever manifesting themselves in every street of our common life. Jesus is the avenue to God. "No man cometh unto the Father save by me." Jesus is the Word, but he is the word *of God*. We must not be content until we have traveled the road with him ("I am the way") and arrived at the comprehensive knowledge and experience of God himself. It was a true instinct which led Sidney Lanier to write,

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of
God:

I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen
flies

In the freedom that fills all the space twixt the
marsh and the skies:

By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of
God."

Only thus can our religious natures exhibit that spaciousness, that profundity, that reality which should characterize the true believer and disciple.

What was Jesus' basic belief concerning the possibility of commerce between the human spirit and the divine Spirit? Did he believe that it was possible, even reasonable, to suppose that a man could actually come in contact with God, and be conscious of an

interrelationship that was definite, objective, and verifiable? Is there out beyond the rim of the things that are seen and heard another realm that "eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard"? Is there a bridge across that border line, and may our spirits travel that highway until we have a "conviction of things not seen"? Is God "the rewarder of them that diligently seek him"? May our human hearts and our human understandings actually be brought into conscious, vivid, realistic contact with the living God? When we answer these questions we are at the center of the spiritual universe and not far from the satisfying home of our souls.

If we accept Jesus we must accept the fundamental assumptions upon which his life and character are based. And the foremost of these is to be discovered in his sublime and unwavering sense of communion with God. He lived in God. God was the atmosphere that he breathed. He could stand anything except to lose the sense of that fellowship, to be cut off from the currents of divine power that were ceaselessly flowing from the Father's heart into his own heart. This spiritual nexus, this highway of the soul, this bond of oneness, was the center of all reality, the secret of his strength, the joy of his redeeming heart.

How did Jesus achieve and preserve inviolate this luminous sense of communion with the Father? We must put aside the theory that it was intuitive and

necessitated. To believe that it was not an achievement but only a dowry from above is to rob him, and us as well, of his true humanity. In the intercourse between Jesus and God there can be discovered spiritual secrets which may open to us, if we will, rich and sadly needed inner experiences. How was it that in so rare a measure Jesus lived in the sustaining and strengthening sense of God's immediate presence?

The nearness of God was insured by the initial commitment of his life. He found joy in the will of God. When God called him from the carpenter's bench he obeyed. When the commission at the Jordan sounded in his heart he never quailed. To him life was a response to a divine summons. "My meat," he said, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." This sense of a high commission surcharged his soul with lofty courage, and led him over every difficulty, even the obstacle of the cross. "Not my will but thine be done." This utter abandonment to a divine vocation is the groundwork upon which rises the sense of communion. God is strange and unfamiliar to so many of us because we live our lives outside his will. We choose our personal destinies and God is not in all our thoughts, and then when our little self-planned world tumbles in on us we wonder why he is not near and savingly available. Jesus kept God near by living near God.

He further kept fresh and flowing this sense of

oneness with the Father by presenting himself ever as the channel of God's grace to men. "From the moment of his entrance upon his public career," says Shirley Jackson Case, "Jesus possessed an overmastering conviction that his life had been linked with Deity in new bonds of experience and obligation." He would offer to God an unobstructed path into men's hearts. If that meant opposing the religious organizations of his day, he would oppose them; if it meant eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, he would take the social venture with all its consequences; if it meant humbling himself and taking upon himself the form of a servant, he would divest himself completely of the glory which he had with the Father and become the servant of man; if it meant accepting crucifixion with its humiliation and anguish, he would lay unflinching hold upon his cross, "for the joy that was set before him." He would in all things and in every way do not his own will, but the will of him whom he was thus revealing to men. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." It was this complete obedience, this humble submission of his life to what he felt was the purpose of God for mankind, that kept alive the vitalizing sense of God's immediacy, which he so signally suggested when he said, "I and the Father are one."

Intimacy with God is further conditioned by love for our fellow-man. The cable that leads to the knowledge of God is circuited through our brother's

need. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." It is selfishness that dims our inner light. The exaltation of our ego means the dethronement of God. We are so busy carrying out petty and inconsequential schemes that there is little standing room left in our crowded lives where God might rise and speak. The dust of our hurrying feet clouds his face, and our babel cries stifle the still small whisper of his presence.

"No one could tell me where my soul might be;
I searched for God, and He eluded me;
I sought my brother out, and found all three."

These more general attitudes of Jesus found their superlative exhibition in his personal prayer life. There is no need in this connection to enlarge upon the fact or the scope of Jesus' prayer habit. The fact is embedded in the gospel story so conspicuously that it becomes an integral part of the picture of the Master. Prayer was to him a necessary and inevitable consequence of his attitude to God and to his fellow-men. He did not steal away upon the mountain side before the break of day in order that he might impress his disciples with his piety. He went because he felt the need of the strengthening inflow of divine power that came from an hour spent in the mystically conscious presence of his Father. If the battery of his spiritual energies was worn down by the constant strain of a ministry to dull and unre-

sponding hearts, he knew that he could recharge his spiritual energies by contact with the Source of power. If his own heart was torn by conflict, wounded by disloyalty, disappointed by the evident lack of faith on the part of his disciples, he could gain comfort, patience, poise in the quiet aloofness of an hour spent alone with God. If the drama of his personal ministry seemed to be hurrying to futile and frustrated ends, he could open a window into heaven and see the Eternal Purpose fulfilling itself in Moses and Elijah and coming to its consummating glory in God's own beloved Son. In that vision, breaking upon his praying spirit, there was strength for the lonely pathway that led through the valley and the shadow of death. And when the Cross came at last, with all its grim and harrowing shame, he faced it and conquered it in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he fought the issue through with God and won the victory on the agonizing battlefield of prayer.

There is something about Jesus that reminds us of that story of Dr. Jowett's about the humble cobbler who was a member in one of his early parishes. All day long he sat on his bench in the narrow little shop that was crowded in between the walls of two great buildings in a city. "Don't you get tired and unhappy sitting all day long in this narrow little shop working on one pair of shoes after another?" asked the pastor. "Yes, I do sometimes," he replied, "but

when I can't stand it any longer I get up and open the door." And with that he arose and opened a door in the rear end of his cramped shop and there before them was a full view of the ocean stretching out to a shoreless horizon. Before the expanding ranges of the mighty sea all the petty annoyances of his little world faded out, absorbed by the peace that rises in our souls when the world of nature enfolds our frail existence into her ageless and ample embrace.

Have we ever contemplated how great would be the loss if these chapters revealing the spontaneous and habitual prayer life of Jesus were stricken from the gospel story? If Jesus, admittedly the world's supreme genius in the field of religion, had felt no inner compulsion to prayer, surely so devastating an example would have put a question mark around the validity of every prayer uttered in our world today. But Jesus prayed, and that fact alone carries with it the assuredness that prayer rests upon a dependable law of spiritual life. Communion between God and man is not only possible, but it is the most highly energizing inner experience known to the human soul. "Take prayer out of the world," says a profound religious philosopher, "and it is as if you had torn asunder the bond that binds humanity to God, and had struck dumb the tongue of the child in the presence of his Father."

II

The habit of prayer in the life of this generation has fallen on difficult days. Frank skepticism prevails at many places as to the efficacy of prayer. Can the modern man pray? is a question that cannot be lightly waved aside. For "men's working belief in prayer is, generally speaking, the most sensitive touchstone of vital, personal religion." To lose prayer out of religion is to have left only an ethical system lacking even the incentive to obey its rules of conduct.

There are two main factors which largely condition this decline in the prayer life of our generation. The first is our changed conception of the world. Science has broken out the walls of our neat little childhood universe and, with quiet confidence, put to flight the factors of divine sovereignty and cosmic instability upon which our older theology depended for the answers to prayer. Probing nature's secrets we have discovered a vast mechanism operated in accordance with well-defined and consistent principles. We call them the laws of nature. Now how can God, in response to our petitions, interfere with the fixed, rigid operation of natural law? Would not the world be in chaos if he did? But the answer is that the universe is something more than a mechanism; in its ultimate essence it is supremely non-material and personal. God is not a prisoner in his created, law-governed universe. He is the Master Creator

who controls the universal laws of life for moral ends. As individual persons we live in a world "crammed with mechanical contrivances and rigidly dominated by natural laws," but we know ourselves to be creative personalities, who use these instruments for personal ends and direct these natural laws for worthy goals. A piano is an instrument built on the principles of physics and mechanics, but it is so much wood, steel, and ivory until a Paderewski brings from its mechanism notes of intriguing tenderness or tumultuous splendor. He achieves his result not by controverting but by controlling for the higher ends of harmony the laws of the natural world. And God is no more hindered by or imprisoned in the cosmic process that we are in our smaller spheres. This is no plea for a God of magic, who responds to our childish petitions for rain in definitely localized areas, or for healing when it has not been established that we are intelligent enough to be worthy to live. It is an assertion that God is still an intelligent, free moral agent, whose ethical but compassionate attitudes to us are not made inexpressible by natural laws. He is not only free but he deliberately chooses to work with and through governing principles operating in a universe whose last enduring essence may turn out to be spirit and not matter. The scientists may not have the last word. It may belong to the saint. To all those who would limit knowledge to sense experience and truth to scientific demonstra-

tion, the mystic may say: "The rest may reason and welcome. 'Tis we musicians know."

The second obstacle to the use of prayer in modern life is the debased and magical practice of it by so many unintelligent Christians. The primitive and superstitious cling to us with pathetic persistence. Small wonder it is that many sincere modern people turn away from the whole idea as either a public spectacle or a kind of religious bargain counter at which we get something for nothing. "The worst heresy is quackery." Consider for a moment the effrontery of the minister who, without a moment of preparation, rushes into the presence of the Almighty and his congregation to unload with unctuous solemnity the trivial generalities and pointless platitudes that make up his morning prayer. There is only one stage lower than this breach of decency, and that is when the coward that stands in the pulpit routes his condemnation of the shortcomings of the people via the throne of God, and thus seeks to make the heavenly Father *particeps criminis* in the exhibition of his irascible, blustering temper. When one thinks of the defamation that this highest and holiest of priestly functions has suffered at the hands of the clergy, he wonders that any of us continue to believe in its essential beauty and potency.

Prayer is not asking for things. It is not cataloguing our wants in the ears of a well-disposed God. It is not storming at the gates of heaven to wheedle

out of an unwilling Deity some personal benefit. All such trivial, egoistic approaches in prayer are travesties upon its sublime realism. Prayer begins in our sense of the need of spiritual fellowship. In our moments of hush and quiet, those alpine heights of the spirit, when our hearts are fused with the eternal heart of the Living God and when all the channels of our nature are open to the sustaining Fountain of spiritual life, then do we know the quivering exaltation of real communion. There is something weirdly pathetic and yet truly noble in the outburst of Rabindranath Tagore as he cries unto the inscrutable mystery which for him is God: "If thou speakest not, I will fill my heart with thy silence and endure it. I will keep still and wait like the night with starry vigil, my head bent low with patience. The morning will come, the darkness will vanish, and Thy voice will pour down in golden streams flooding the sky."

Not alone in these secret trysts with the Lover of our souls is God available to the praying heart. Whenever in life's crowded day we feel the need of fortifying strength, or when, in the floodtide of anguish, we turn with pierced spirits to the Comforter who stands within the veil of our sorrows, we know that from our momentary or our sustained touch with the good God and Father of us all we gather quickened strength and refreshing grace. Prayer cannot be rationalized, it cannot be "explained," it cannot be codified in religious manuals, but it can be

experienced. It has about it the mystery that belongs to all spiritual phenomena. And yet behind it is the integrity of a world in which the Great Companion walks in fellowship with our human spirits and in loving-kindness and tender mercy shares his life with ours.

III

The age in which we live is rich and lavish in its material rewards. Our highly mechanized American society is a glamorous exhibition of what wealth and science and energy can create. And yet underneath the glittering externalism of our modern world there is restlessness, uncertainty, and fear. The gnawing sense of insecurity chills many hearts, and the disillusionment coincident upon the rapid changes taking place in our economic structure breeds a pessimism constantly on the border line of despair. "Our day cries out for a profounder apprehension of reality and a more ultimate anchorage for life's struggles." Our generation lacks depth. It has lost the perspective of eternity. It is no longer in awe before the splendors of the moral law. It is obsessed with liberty and scornful of obedience. It is well fed but undernourished. We are forever on the move but we do not arrive. We know the paths to power but we have lost the secret of the Lord. The fact is, we stand desperately in need of a new awareness of God. This alone can restore to our civilization its lost dig-

nity and set its feet upon new paths of security and splendor. "There can be no peace for the human soul, no respite from the weariness of all transitory and evanescent pursuits except through faith in some One Thing fixed and steadfast, some One Thing utterly unconcerned with the flowing tides of change." The stabilizing force in our American life will turn out to be not our commanding generals, our facile diplomats, nor our towering industrial barons. Of all these we are forced to ask, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" Our strength and security will lie in that goodly company of devout people whose thoughts are as God's thoughts and whose ways are God's ways. A generation ago Gladstone said to his contemporaries, "The task of statesmanship is to discover where God Almighty is going during the next fifty years." That discovery will lead the way to the only permanent recovery that can ever come to the nation. It becomes therefore more highly important that we shall open pathways to the knowledge of God than new channels of world trade, that we shall lay a foundation of security in righteousness rather than in bombing planes and maneuvering navies.

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing."

Jesus offered men no manual of spiritual exercises, no "daily dozen" that led to spiritual health. He

did not have a road map indicating stations on the highway to heaven. He does guide men, however, to the knowledge of God by the very spontaneous naturalness of his life. He was forever looking for the divine in unsuspected places and finding beauty and truth and goodness along the common highways of life. Jesus did not search for God as though he were to be demonstrated at the end of some intellectual formula. He did not argue about him; he simply accepted him as a part of the joyous wonder of the world in which he was living. The secret of Jesus may be our secret, and where he found the Father we may also likewise discover that Divine Other, that self-revealing God, who is ever upon the threshold of our earthly lives, waiting to be discovered and to become our Companion and Friend.

The discovery awaits us *in the natural world around us*. Jesus was "the outdoor Son of God." The friendly universe of nature was his home. The loved hills of Nazareth, with Hermon in the distant haze and the blue Mediterranean on beyond Carmel to the west, filled his boyhood soul with rapturous joy. Along the trails of the open country his sandaled feet trod "the good earth." The imagery of the spirit was always found in bird and flower, in sunshine and rain, in wind and wave. The poppies on Palestinian hills were the vestments of the Eternal, the birds and the foxes were the wards of his fatherly care, the wheat fields were the granaries of

God. It was in the waters of the river that he was baptized, it was upon the heights of the mountain that he was transfigured; it was upon a tree that at last he yielded his spirit in death. All the world around him was vocal with meaning. The beauty that enraptured him, the loving care that enfolded him, the sense of security in an ordered and morally controlled universe strengthened him—these were only expressions of the fundamental truth that this was his Father's world.

The modern man needs to look out with fresh and heightened insight upon the world of nature. God is seeking to reveal himself and our eyes are holden that we should not see him. The mechanization of life, the commercial exploitation of natural resources, the rape of beauty along our highways, the "fretful stir unprofitable and the fever of the world," the pamperings of our cushioned civilization, all tend to becloud the eyes and dull the sensibility to the encircling beauty and the tranquilizing harmony that breathes through all the colors and the forms of Nature.

The mystics are nearer the truth. They sense the eternal in time, and hear the silent voices of the Beauteous Lover as he speaks through sunset and storm, through wayside flower and running brook. If we could refresh our souls in solitude! "How rare it is to find a soul quiet enough to hear God speak."

"When days are full of discord,
And every moment brings
Its share of strife and worry,
I think of quiet things—
Quiet things and calm things—
Lovely things like these:
Dim woods at nightfall,
Snow on hemlock trees,
A cherry tree in blossom,
Cobwebs hung with dew,
Yellow leaves drifting down
With sunlight slanting through;
Behind closed lids I seek them—
Again and yet again—
Curling wisps of wood smoke,
Violets in the rain."

In the second place, God is discoverable *in our human nature*. Evil days have come upon us. We have been subjected to the blight of the sensualist who degrades our human nature and, at the other extreme, to the unreality of the humanist who deifies it. Man is neither a libertine nor an angel. He is a finite creature in whom is discovered infinitude. "Man comes both from dust and from deity." He is a child of earth whose real citizenship is in heaven. Man is from the start a finite-infinite being. He cannot be satisfied with earth; there must be a "surmise of a more yet," of a spiritual adventure after the eternally good. He is forever questing after the ideal. This ideal is alluringly beyond him because it is consciously within him. This restlessness, this unsatisfied

idealism, this "nostalgia for a Beyond," points him across the flux of temporal events to the clear home of the soul, the abode of the ideal to which he cannot now attain, but which he will never surrender as the real destiny of his spirit. This experience of the ideal confronts man ever with God. Truly we need not search for him in distant stellar spaces nor yet in some far-off divine event. Knock upon thine own heart and he will answer. He is within us forever challenging our lower selves and prompting our feet on the highroad which leads to the ultimate. "The road to God is not far off, but it is in us—in the very soul of man." Eliza Scudder's words reveal the pathway.

"Thou Life within my life, than self more near,
 Thou veiled Presence infinitely clear,
 From all illusive shows of sense I flee,
 To find my center and my rest in Thee."

Pringle-Pattison has caught the subtle but rich meaning that lies behind these flashes of the eternal and the infinitely good that are forever breaking in upon the drama of our earth-bound lives. "Whence, then, are these ideals derived, and what is the meaning of their presence in the human soul? Whence does man possess this outlook upon a perfect Truth and Beauty and infinite Goodness? Man did not weave them out of nothing any more than he brought himself into being. 'It is he that hath made us, and

not we ourselves'; and from the same fontal Reality must be derived those ideals which are the master-light of all our seeing, the element, in particular, of our moral and religious life. The presence of the Ideal is the reality of God within us." Thus our consciousness of values is the flash of God.

"From the true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore."

The "love that will not let us go" is God's spirit within us, persuasively revealing himself to the soul that seeks the higher goals that lie beyond the reach of mortal grasp.

The path that brings us to the discovery of God leads through another avenue, namely, the *creative process of living*. We have passed through a period of severe questioning regarding all religious reality. We have been spending most of our time asking questions. The time has come for us to begin to give some answers to the questions we have been asking. We have sought to understand prayer by "explaining" it, when in reality we understand prayer by praying. We have sought to find God by unraveling the mystery that surrounds him. A shorter and surer way would be to join him in the creative process of making a better world. Jesus suggested this when he said, "He who wills to do God's will shall know" God is not an abstraction to be apprehended. On every hand we may discern his beneficent activity,

lifting handicaps from childhood, judging an economic order that throttles personality, fighting for justice for the underprivileged, condemning hate by inflicting the penalties of hate, battling for peace by piercing the consciences of men with the dramatization of the terrifying cost of war. We see him in the tenements pleading for sunlight and playgrounds, in the unreached areas of backward lands asking, through his lonely heralds, for the chance to bring in the abundant life. And who has not seen him in that innumerable host of humble followers of his way, who, in open country, in village, and in city, spend their days making the world safer and gladder for all God's children? Yes, God is at work in this world, and if anyone would find him he must search where he is.

James Gordon Gilkey tells of a convincing religious experience that came into the life of a college student whom he met on an American campus. Here in his own words is the simple story. "A year ago last Christmas I forfeited the usual round of holiday parties and took a job in our local post-office. With the money I earned I bought some food and clothing for a family in desperate need. I shall never forget the night I delivered those Christmas presents. The weather was raw and cold, and I had to drive about thirty miles to one of the worst slums of Chicago. I finally reached the tenement where this family lived and made my way up four flights of

dingy, rickety stairs. The eight people I had come to help were living in two small and terribly dirty rooms. The father was dying of tuberculosis, and the mother was on the verge of collapse from nervous and physical exhaustion. The six children were dressed literally in rags. When they opened the door and saw me standing in the hall laden with presents, they could hardly speak. To tell the truth, I couldn't say much myself. As I left those rooms and walked down those stairs, I was suddenly sure of the presence of God. Not all the arguments on earth can make me doubt that experience. I know God was there with me. I know that as I tried to help that family his life touched mine." "Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

Honesty demands that we take one further and deeper step. *Is it possible for the human spirit to have an immediate experiential contact with God?* May we find the Absolute within the mystic centers of our own personal lives? Did Jesus so experience God?

The necessary excursion into the realm of mysticism that is made necessary by the above questions must be safeguarded at several points. It is not the speculative mysticism of the textbook that interests us; it is mysticism as "the practice of union with God." It is not the flinching, world-avoiding mysticism of those who hide out from life's reality that concerns us. It is rather the man who being "in the

world is not of the world," because he finds poise and creativity in a conscious contact with the Absolute. The spurious types of mysticism mentioned above have tended to throw into disrepute the whole idea of the reality of the mystic's experience and largely explain the low rating given to mysticism by our practical-minded generation.

One other preliminary consideration demands attention. We are concerned not with the prevalence of the mystic's discovery of God, but with its factual possibility. The suspicion of unreality which hangs over so many recorded stories of men who have found God in some ecstatic experience must not blind us to the fact that though a thousand fail our concern is with the one who succeeds. As nature rejects a hundred specimens to bring to perfection a single plant, so there may be a multitude whose example is without significance, but one emerges out of the group whose direct contact with God is so luminous and trustworthy that it carries in its heart the credibility of the total experience. That which is actual in the rare individual who fulfils perfectly the conditions is potentially present in every man. May not Bernard of Clairvaux, Lao Tze of China, and Sundar Singh of India be the pioneers into a new spiritual empire which shall indeed be the theater of the next impending spiritual adventure?

It is my firm belief that Jesus was one of those rare souls for whom communion with God was the

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very breath of life, the ultimate in spiritual reality. His contact with the Father was just as real and objective as his fellowship with the disciples. He could no more doubt one than he could the other. Shall we not say that for Paul, who knew Christ not after the flesh but after the spirit, this momentous, immediate realization of God in Christ was the very core and center of life. "I live, and yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.*" Thus Jesus becomes not only the historic founder of our faith, not only the object of our external worship, not only the eternal, finished pattern of our lives, but above all these and supremely he is *a living presence* with whom we may have real communion of soul. The heart of the Christian religion rests on the "belief that we may have direct, immediate, and intuitive knowledge through the real, living communion of our souls with his."

"Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of."

This marvelous blending of our spirits with the Great Spirit in whom we live and have our very being is a constituent potency of our earthly life. For this reason worship is the highest act of the human will. Along this road men cannot travel encumbered by "the heavy and weary weight of all this unintelligible world." Here one must stand stripped

and emancipated so that into his selfless soul there may flow the burning light and the healing peace that awaits those who die to the flesh that they may live in God.

From among many available illustrations of this deep inner experience, I select the following personal account given by Gandhi of an experience leading him to undertake one of his recent fasts. "For me the voice of God, of conscience, of truth, or the inner voice or the 'still small voice,' mean one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the voice. The hearing of the voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. I listened, made certain that it was the voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast were fixed. Joy came over me. Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the voice that I heard and that it was not the echo of my own heated imagination? I have no further evidence to convince the skeptic. He is free to say that it was all self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this—that not the unanimous verdict of the

whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true voice of God."

The challenge to modern Protestantism lies in the realm of spiritual authority. The heart has lost its way amid the multiplying complexities of our modern world and turns to the church for guidance and direction. Have we only a theory of God to offer to men tired of uncertainty and drifting, or can we declare with convincing positiveness a doctrine of the real presence of God? Our generation needs to know not so much that there is a God, but that he is actively near, avaiably present.

Here is our difficulty. This brilliant and beautiful world reminds us of God, but somehow for many of us he is actually and personally not there. We have lost him and have been forced to become content to get along as best we can without him. But "there is an emptiness within the human breast that is the deepest and wildest of all desires." God is the only answer. When this new and vibrant sense of the ever-living God overwhelms the church the day of her authority and power will be here again. For the world must find God or lose its life.

UNITY AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD



Unity and World Brotherhood

WHAT one thinks of God determines what one believes about man. The idea of the fundamental unity of all life rests upon the basic conception of the nature of God. Here we turn again to Jesus for light. The background of his idea carries us into the pages of Hebrew history and the long struggle of this chosen people to dissociate themselves from current paganism and achieve a worthy theistic faith. Herein lies the chief contribution of the Hebrew to the world. Out of the fires of their own experiences they brought forth the conception of ethical monotheism which has become the starting point for any worthy attempt to understand God. "I, Jehovah, am one God, and beside me there is none other." "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Jesus accepted and taught these basic ideas of the Hebrew conception of Jehovah. God is one, not many. God is a moral personality.

Not blind physical force but active goodness is the deepest characteristic of the Ultimate Reality.

True as the above view may be, it was not fully adequate. It was the truth, but not all the truth. Jesus came in the fulness of time to fulfil the law and the prophets. It was his mission to fill full of new and gracious meanings this ancient conception of the Divine. He took up where the Hebrew prophet left off, and as a result we have Jesus' distinctive contribution to man's search after the nature of the Eternal: *God is our Heavenly Father*. Dr. Denny, in his new book on the life of Jesus, calls striking attention to the four inescapable implications of Jesus' original picture of God. First, he made fatherhood the *dominant* idea in God. This word describes what he actually found God to be in his essential nature. Secondly, God's fatherhood became *universal*. He was the father of all, Jew and Gentile alike. No longer could he be a national monopoly but a true Father of humanity. In the third place, this universalizing of God's fatherhood makes him the Father of *every individual*. Saint, sinner, Hebrew, foreigner, all alike could look up into his face and cry, "My Father." And finally, Jesus clarified and *enriched the meaning of fatherhood by living the perfect life of a Son of God* and thereby revealed that God was the kind of Father who could have and approve such a Son as Jesus.

All these ideas are commonplace in our religious

thinking today. We can sense only with difficulty their disturbing novelty in the day on which they were first spoken. The common people, long dispossessed of any choice to discover God and know him, heard this "Good News" with wild and sustained enthusiasm. It was only as their fears were played upon by the blind selfishness of the Pharisee that they turned away from Jesus. For this teacher of new and strange doctrines was cutting the very foundation from under the idea of Israel's divine favoritism and nationalistic supremacy. It might be highly beneficial if we were willing to face frankly and treat fearlessly the implications of this doctrine in the disturbed interrelations of our modern world. For herein is a conception of the universe, an ideal of humanity, which holds in its heart the answer to our most baffling antagonisms.

I

It is not to be wondered at that this idea of the fatherhood of God and the consequent doctrine of the brotherhood of man came to slow acceptance in the first century. Racial exclusiveness and group animosities abounded and were accepted broadly as in no manner irreconcilable with devoted faith. It became the mission of Christianity to bring a new unity into human life and to overthrow the barriers that man, and not God, had set up between differing races and cultures. So structural a task could not be ac-

completed without conflict, and it is an absorbing study to watch the triumph of this catholic ideal as it is reflected in the experience of Jesus and certain conspicuous early disciples.

There has been much debate over the scope of Jesus' ministry. Was he merely a Jewish Messiah or the Savior of all mankind? "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "Go not into any way of the Gentiles" and other similar statements might indicate that Jesus shared the exclusiveness of all the Jews of his day. But there is too much weight on the other side. He revealed himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman. He rebuked his disciples for desiring to call down fire on a foreign village. He made the hero of one of his greatest parables a Samaritan. Of the Roman centurion's faith he said: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." I think we can assume that Jesus' large and free affection ignored all these artificial divisions among men unless they were forced on his attention. And then he used them only to lead men and women beyond them. He centered his ministry on the Jews because in the prophetic teaching there had already been planted the seed which he could best nurture and bring to maturity in his gospel of universal redemption.

In the inner struggle of Simon Peter there is recorded the whole gamut from racial exclusiveness to world brotherhood. By the grace of God he went the

whole distance. Drenched in Judaistic traditions, he yet became the friend and defender of the Gentile's place in the plan of salvation. He finally surrendered his prejudice with the far-reaching admission, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in *every nation* he that feareth him is acceptable to him." Down goes every barrier before the waves of free grace in Christ. When Peter baptized Cornelius and "on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit," Jesus Christ became potentially a universal Savior and the veil of the temple of humanity was rent forever in twain.

What Peter stumbled on in experience, Paul rationalized in theology. He was called out of his Hebrew background to become the channel of God's redemption to Gentile and Jew alike, to bond and free. In his missionary journeys he gave startling proof of this new doctrine that all men are one in Christ. This made the gospel current philosophy in the agora of Athens and sensational news in the house of Caesar. His doctrine of oneness in Christ struck at the slave philosophy upon which the Roman state was built, and no less violently demolished the ecclesiastical exclusiveness upon which Jewish religion rested. It was a charge of dynamite beneath the incrustured surface of an unbrotherly world.

If you would witness how this new conception of the fundamental unity of humanity broke down ancient hurdles and opened up new highways of life,

pause for a moment to study its bearing on three aspects of life that cut diagonally across Roman society in the first century. Take the first area, the relative standing of the sexes. Until this principle became active women were restricted, by virtue of being women, to an inferior position. The idea that men and women stood on an equal footing in essential value was unheard of until the Christian ideal revealed that there was a higher unity in which male and female met as comrades and equals and not as superior and inferior, privileged and suppliant. Or take the social-economic field. Slavery was the accepted theory. The Roman mastery rested on the backs of unfortunate humans known as slaves. That this servile, serf philosophy could ever be abandoned, or that it was other than right, was stoutly resisted even to our own generation. But slavery is bad economics because it is bad morality. No accidental power of one man over the life of another can bisect humanity into master and servant. When Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon and besought him to receive him again "no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a *brother beloved*," a principle was set going in the world that would finally break the shackles from every slave on earth. Master and servant thus become one and equal in the sight of God. The leveling force of this idea of Jesus is also seen in its effect upon the juxtaposition of saint and sinner. In the world of Jesus sinners were outcasts.

They were to be shut out from the synagogues, and death by stoning was the penalty that was meted out to the flagrant offender. To be outside the law was to be a pariah and to suffer public ostracism. This explains the horror of the Pharisees when Jesus ate with "publicans and sinners." To him they were men needing a friend, lonely sons away from the Father's house, and he would not shut the door in their face and leave them unsought and unshepherded on the plains of life. Look at the intimate, personal way in which Jesus overleaps these barriers of sin and shame. He dines with a publican, calls a taxgatherer to be a disciple, accepts the courtesies of the day from a sinful and outcast woman, and welcomes a thief into Paradise. Against such active, inclusive magnanimity no unjust caste system can stand. In this revolutionary gospel neither sex nor slavery nor sin shall be allowed to disrupt the unity of God's family.

II

In a new and striking fashion this unity of the human race was made discernible and believable in the person of Jesus Christ. He was Universal Man. Edwin Lewis traces this to an essential and exceptional quality of his nature. The doctrine has elements of mysticism about it, and yet it seems to have a real philosophic basis. God is the originating unity out of which all life springs, the Light that lighteth every man. Each of us reflects a part of that light in

proportion as we reflect the image of God in our personalities. But there are severe limitations upon us by virtue of our human nature. Jesus transcends those limitations, and while yet preserving his true humanity, becomes the perfect embodiment of God. "The Word (Logos) became flesh," and we beheld in him therefore not a "broken light" but the effulgence of a complete and wholly satisfying revelation of the Father-God. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." *All the fulness.* Accepting this Christian thesis, we understand the words of Lewis as he concludes "that Jesus Christ, because he represents the expression under human terms of that total divine fact which other men express only in part, possesses a universal character." It is because of this universal character that he could act in a universal capacity and accomplish that which had universal significance. Of course, this contention carries us into a theory of the person of Christ for which we are not now in a position to argue. But as we proceed to examine the basis of this sense of unity in humanity, and are repeatedly brought back to the discovery that he is the personal bond that binds men together and that the spiritual experience through which this unity becomes conscious and emotionally commanding always gathers around loyalty to him, then we are led to accept in philosophy what we discover to be true in life and history.

The most astounding fact in the personal life of

mankind is the central, commanding position of Jesus Christ. That a peasant, born in the Roman Empire in the first century, living his life within the narrow boundaries of his own native land, with only the most casual contacts outside his own race and nation, should become the living Ideal of all men who search for Reality, is a fact so exceptional as to demand an explanation commensurate with the Fact it undertakes to explain. He will not fit into our surface categories of human life. He overflows them by the spacious range of his appeal to all men. He transcends the outline of our human picture. Men and women alike find in him their ideal. Rich and poor are his brothers. The wise and the unlearned sit at his feet. The aged and the child alike find him meeting life's ascending moral needs. The Oriental and the Occidental both find in him the unity which nature seems to make so difficult of achievement.

“But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
 But Thee, O poet's Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
 But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
 O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
 O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
 What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
 What least defect or shadow of defect,
 What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace
 Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's,—
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?”

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It is easy enough to explain the universality of Jesus' appeal by the simple statement that he is God, and therefore the answer to every man's yearning. But the reply is too easy and is not convincing. There have been other gods. For deities the world has not lacked through the centuries. But no one has had about him the quality of appeal that we find in Jesus. Transplant these other religious leaders from the soil in which they originated, and they wither and refuse to flower in lives of beauty and truth. This is true of Mohammed, of Gautama Buddha, of Krishna, and Confucius. There is about each of them the indigenous mark of geographical localism and racial provincialism. No clearer evidence of this could be seen than in the way in which eastern nations, such as China and Japan, are turning away from their national gods as they are swept from the moorings of their past into the stream of modern life. Buddhism, adequate for a static and tradition-bound past, is helpless in the swirl of a new day. China's students turn out by the hundred thousands to hear of One who can build on the wrecks of their old monasteries and temples the new and just social order which the ancient gods could not produce. A hundred years ago the world consisted of continents that had but little intercourse with one another. Today a new unity of internationalism has sprung up and the world is infinitely smaller than before. This process of unification is a sifting process

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as well, and customs and practices and forms of government and forms of worship must today meet a universal test, whereas a century ago they might completely satisfy a segment of humanity. The closer men live together the more important it is to find a rational common denominator of their separate life. There is an increasing feeling that the old alternative must ever recur—it is spiritual integration or international anarchy; it is Christ or chaos.

No, it is not in any mechanical sense because Jesus is God, that men find in him unity. It is a broader truth than that. It is because the aspirations for the spiritual values of life which characterize all men in more or less degree, find in him their most luminous and perfect embodiment. It is a unity that grows up into Christ out of the fundamental unities which characterize man as man. God has put some of his image into every child he has created, and when that child looks into the face of Jesus Christ he beholds in perfection that within his own soul which stirs the passion for the infinite. As was said of Jehovah in ancient times, so may it be said of him who came in the name of the Lord, "The eyes of all wait for thee; and thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

There are three basic spiritual urges in human life, the passion for the good, for the beautiful, and for the true. These goals human beings have sought in all time. They are constituent hungers of mankind. They form a kind of universalizing bond that tran-

scends race and clime and calendars and brings together into one goodly company all the lovers of the highest in nature and knowledge and character. These spiritual concepts know no limitations. You cannot build a wall around the truth, or hide goodness in a dungeon, or shut beauty up upon your canvas. They dwell in the lofty heights of the moral stratosphere where the ancient divisions of time and culture and nations mean nothing. I can watch a little brown-skinned artist cutting life and spirit into a piece of ivory amid the hills of Nikko, or I can study a crude Chinese in an old dilapidated shanty carving wood until it almost breathes, or I can watch an artist in the Pitti gallery copying Raphael's "Madonna" with such verisimilitude that it almost steps out of the canvas, and I know that in that realm of art there is no Japanese, Chinese, or Italian. I read lines of immortal truth from Plato, I wrestle with the disturbing, volcanic periods of old Thomas Carlyle, I am stirred by the vivid and disquieting ideas of Tolstoi, and I know that I am in the universal home of the truth. There we find no dividing lines between Greek and English and Russian. In imagination I sit in the ashram of the little brown man of India, and in the face of Gandhi I catch some gleam of the illuminated anguish which dwelt on the countenance of St. Stephen or of John Huss. In those higher realms of goodness there is no India, Palestine, or Czechoslovakia. If you go high enough, you get

clear away from fences and boundaries and border lines, and you see the world as God sees it, lying fair and free in the ample, frontierless expanse of his ultimate purpose for a unified humanity.

To return to our question: Why do men find this satisfying center of humanity in Christ? The answer is because when men seek for goodness they find it superlatively in him; when they seek for beauty they recognize that he has been its chief inspirer and revealer; and when they seek for truth they confess, if ever truth has come to men, it came in him who said, "*I am the truth.*" Jesus thus becomes the answer to the spiritual quests of humanity, the essential bond which transpierces our differences, silences our selfish antagonisms, and unites us in the pursuit and the adoration of the Highest. In his soul men find mirrored back to them that which is purest and noblest in their own aspirations. He becomes thus the great Oversoul of humanity in whom our differences are resolved and our unities are apprehended.

III

Any view of world unity which is Christian in theory and application must rest upon the recognition of four fundamental considerations which the study of anthropology has made clear. To evade these facts is to miss the road into racial understanding. Frankly and realistically to face them will deliver us from a great deal of the prejudice and

spurious emotionalism that so frequently beset us whenever we approach the problems of racial and national tensions.

In the first place, *we must recognize the common stream of identity that flows through all men.* There are many aspects in which humanity is alike everywhere. Human nature in all lands is shaken by the same fears, responds to the same fundamental stimuli, is driven by the same passions and ambitions. The recognition of this basic fact would keep us from thinking other people "queer" when they are acting exactly as we would act under similar circumstances. We loudly condemn the Japanese for taking Manchuria, but we conveniently forget our own experience in Panama. I recall a Japanese attache in Shanghai talking to an American business man, explaining the action of the Japanese army in Manchuria. "We had to get out or go in," he said. "We decided to go in." That reminds us of one of the little publicized statements credited to Theodore Roosevelt: "We had to have the canal, so we took it." Or the frantic efforts to keep the Spanish-American War from being concluded until we got all of the Philippines that we wanted. Take the question of tariffs today. It is an international game played by every nation for its own advantage. The battle for markets is conducted by the politician and the industrialist in every land according to the same ruthless, nationalistic rules. We are fundamentally

alike in our hatreds, our prejudices, our ambitions, our lying propagandas, our national sins, and, let us rejoice to acknowledge, also in our latent good will, our response to honor, our fundamental integrities. In the lowest and the highest registers of international life there is no dividing color line.

The second realistic fact which we must face is *the sacred integrity of racial groups*. There is a biological inheritance varying with different races, elements of racial individuality, which we must understand and respect. As a member of the human family you are a man, but as an individual within that larger group you are a separate and solitary personality. If I am to deal with you intelligently and sympathetically, I must take into consideration your personal inheritance, your individual psychology, and the conditions which environ you as a member of one of the smaller units of mankind. To refuse to do this is to destroy the integrity of your personality and to make it impossible to deal worthily with you as an individual. The same identical law must govern our dealings with other races. We violated this principle when we passed the Japanese Exclusion Act and publicly affronted Japanese self-respect. For years the white man has insisted that "the Negro must know his place and keep it," and yet in a shameless manner white lust has invaded Negro racial integrity, and denied the Negro father the right to defend his daughter's virtue, while we lynch the Negro youth

for an attempt at the same promiscuity which we practice on his race. We shall not attain world unity by racial amalgamation. The Scriptures recognize these two above principles, the oneness of humanity and at the same time the individuality of differing racial groups within the whole: "He made of one every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth, *having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation.*"

The third Christian principle is *the inviolate rights of the individual person*. Our modern civilization tends to dehumanize, to lose the separate individual in the national mass. We must allow no wall of difference to shut us off from the humanity that is in every man. Long centuries ago Menander rose above the limitations of his race to declare:

"Whoe'er by nature's well disposed towards good,
Negro though he be, a gentleman is he."

We hated Germany and called her people "Boche," but we forgot the thrifty, genteel, God-fearing German peasant who was there all the time and whom we stigmatized by an unjust generalization. I find that it is easy for people to say, "I don't like the Japanese." If they could know, as I do, Hirohita Kagawa, Motozo Akazawa, and a host of other luminous personalities in Japan, they would no longer "hate the Japanese." A man has the right to be judged by the standards of intelligence, integrity,

honor, and altruism. We ask this criterion for ourselves. We must grant it to others. To deny it to an individual on the basis of the amount of pigment in his skin is an inhuman injustice which has no place in the Christian mind.

"But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed
nor Birth

When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they
come from the ends of the earth."

The final principle is that of *recognizing the enriching differences that exist within the fundamental unity of humanity*. Differences do not necessarily divide; they may enrich. Only as each separate integer makes its contribution to the totality do we have the real whole. We recognize the principle in the body; it is the contribution of each member that makes the unified physical personality. In an orchestra it is the balance and union of wind and string instruments that makes possible the presentation of any great musical score. So it is with society. It takes "the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker" and a hundred more to set the stage for our civilized life. Now lift the conception a step higher. The orchestration of the oratorio we call "Life" calls for the separate and distinct blending of varying cultures. If it were all Anglo-Saxon it would be flat; if it were all Latin it would be quixotic; if it were all oriental it would be jumpy and nervous; if it were

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all Negro it would be somber and sentimental. But because it is none of these alone it is all of these at their best. There are no barriers now that can keep cultural movements within national or racial frontiers. We need the contribution of each for the good of all. If an Indian can build a Taj-Mahal, and a German can create a "March from Tannhauser," and an Englishman can write a "Hamlet," and a Chinese can dream a "Temple of Heaven," and a Negro can sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and a Greek can construct a Parthenon, and a Hebrew can conceive of a companionable God, how narrow and blind we are when we shut any of them out of that pilgrim band which marches across the climbing centuries and builds here in the midst of time a glamorous way for the feet of men out of darkness and death into a new heaven and a new earth.

"Mercy for us of the few, young years,
Of the culture so callow and crude,
Of the hands so grasping and rude,
The lips so ready for sneers
Of the sons of our ancient more-than-peers.
Mercy for us who dare despise
Men in whose loins our Homer lies;
Mothers of men who shall bring to us
The glory of Titian, the grandeur of Huss;
Children in whose frail arms shall rest
Prophets and singers and saints of the West.
Newcomers all from the eastern seas,
Help us incarnate dreams like these.

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Forget and forgive that we did you wrong.
Help us to father a nation, strong
In the comradeship of an equal birth,
In the wealth of the richest bloods on earth."

IV

The difficulty in all these matters under discussion is that we are safe as long as we are not specific. Dealing with general principles and shying off from particular applications is a form of shadow boxing that we religious folks are particularly fond of practicing. The race problem will never be solved by the "Committee on Findings." It may get forward a considerable distance when a white man and a colored man sit down together to confer and then rise up to co-operate. Let's get these sentiments out of the clouds down into the dust of the highway on which our common feet are walking.

We may as well begin with the household of faith. One of the major explanations of the ineffectiveness of the church's plea for unity in the world is the absence of essential unity within the church itself. Our voice lacks the compelling note of authority because it does not have behind it the force of a united Christendom. Unity does not imply uniformity. It does not involve the denial of our individual right to be different. But the spirit of Jesus, to whom each group asseverates its loyalty, does demand that partisan rivalries shall cease, that each denomination that

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bears his name shall become a co-operative member of the Church Universal. The burden of the spirit of the New Testament is solidly against a divided Christianity. The inclusive love of God, the uniting bond of a common experience of salvation and grace in Jesus Christ, the momentum of the traditions of historic Christianity made possible by the faith of the seer and the blood of the martyr, the pressure of a life-and-death struggle against a tireless, unprincipled evil world, the growing tension between races and nations, the all-inclusive, all-encompassing person of Christ—all these considerations cry aloud and demand that we shall end the scandal of our divisions and unite around those things most surely believed and experienced by each of us. A divided church can never conquer a united world.

What is the bearing of the principle of unity upon our treatment of the weaker races? Here emerges one of the darkest chapters in history. It would seem that the earth belongs to those who can capture it. Instead of bearing the burdens of the weak, the strong have traded upon their weaknesses and made them the cause for exploitation. Often under the guise of magnanimity we have secured trading rights and territory at the point of a threat behind which was a gun. We talked much a few years ago about "the white man's burden." It was simply one of those pious phrases of Nordic egotism which covers up a shameless, economic, and territorial imperialism.

The white man's burden became the dark man's cross. We do not like to recall the diplomatic spoliation of China, the parceling out of Africa, the annexation of Korea, and a host of other dark episodes in the conflicts between a weaker race and a stronger. How long shall the world continue a hunting ground for preying majorities, crushing into submission helpless minorities by the law of the jungle, and when shall we pierce through the lying propaganda that attributes the whole piratical exploitation to a desire "to preserve the peace of the world and fulfil our destiny as the protector of the weak"? To be a pirate is bad enough, but to be a smug international brigand in the name of God is blasphemy.

The power of the Christian religion in America is going to be tested not by the increase of our numerical strength or the rising chart of our church-controlled wealth. We shall stand or fall as a Christian force by the manner in which we deal with the weaker races that are among us. Here God has led us into our valley of decision. By this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples, because we have love for all men, regardless of color or condition of servitude. To our shame, we have too often looked upon the Mexican and the Japanese merely as a "labor problem"; too often we have used the Negro as a means to an end but not as a worthy end in himself. There must be something beyond "a square deal for the Negro." If God the Father dealt with us on the

low level of the square deal, we should all be without hope. We must treat the Mexican, the Slav, the Pole, the Negro as a brother in the family of God. He must have his chance to make, unhindered and with welcome appreciation, his contribution to our united life. To despise another man because his background is different from ours and his skin is a shade off color, is not only blind stupidity but practical atheism. In a Southern college several years ago Dr. T. R. Glover was speaking on "Jesus in the Experience of Men." There followed a discussion of race relationship. Dr. Glover was silent throughout the discussion. But when he closed his final lecture on Jesus Christ he made this significant utterance: "You may have race prejudice if you want it; or you may have Jesus if you want him; but you cannot have both."

A recent book from a brilliant English pen is called *Nationalism, Man's Other Religion*. The title is no exaggeration. The most acute forms of difficulty we have today grow out of nationalistic conflicts. There seems to have been a rebound from the growing internationalism of other days, and we find ourselves exalting dictators, fighting for the lion's share of trade, raising tariff walls, increasing our defenses, abridging free speech, deserting the League of Nations, voting against the World Court. One wonders how much of this drift is political blindness and how much of it economic shortsightedness. Our own national malady cannot be cured until the sick men of

Europe are made better. A policy of isolation is not only impossible, but the very idea of it is banal and stupid. The good of each is bound up with the good of all. If we even half tried to cultivate friendly relations with Japan, to smooth out misunderstanding, to pave the way for the exchange of commodities and cultures, we should not develop so quickly a war psychology and subject ourselves to unnatural suspicions from nations on the other side of the Pacific. The service of Ambassador Morrow in Mexico changed the whole trend of Mexico's attitude to the United States. "My country right or wrong"—my country, my flag, my rights—when these sentiments constitute a nationalist faith and close our eyes to the rights of other peoples and the higher strategies of good will and international co-operation, we may expect to see the world torn into bloody ribbons again as it has been in the past. There is an almost classic paragraph in Dr. Tittle's *Jesus After Nineteen Centuries* that draws a keen demarcation between nationalism and true patriotism: "Patriotism reduces human egoism; nationalism inflates it. Patriotism appeals to the knight in a man, that latent chivalrous self which is eager to serve; nationalism appeals to the brute in a man, that lower and meaner self which desires not to serve but to dominate. Patriotism opens men's eyes to what is right and just in social relationships, makes them morally sensitive; nationalism so blinds their eyes to valid ethical distinctions that they

actually consider it praiseworthy to say, 'Right or wrong, I stand for the policies of my country.' Patriotism develops a concern for others which may be made to include all others the world around; nationalism develops a disregard for others which naturally and viciously leads in the end to a disregard for everything other than one's own selfish interest. Patriotism spiritualizes, nationalism vulgarizes, the human soul. Patriotism makes a man a gentleman; nationalism makes him a cad." The words of Edith Cavell, dying on the altar of humanity, must be heard: "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness in my heart."

What will the future bring in this area of tension? It is no longer a localized problem. It is world-wide. Yesterday it was in Bombay; today it is in Johannesburg; tomorrow it will be in Shanghai. Yesterday it was in Detroit; today it is in San Francisco; tomorrow it will be in Atlanta. This is "the rising tide of color." Nine-tenths of the habitable land surface of the globe is under the control of the white man, while less than fifty per cent of the population is white. I know personally how restless these tinted multitudes are. They have been quiescent under the white man's supremacy, but every day finds increasing clamor for justice, for equality of rights, for the abandonment of racial discrimination and the application of the principles latent in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We carried this gospel of personal values and exalted so-

cial ideals to these nations. Do we now rue the day we let in upon them the light of the gospel? Does our missionary ardor rise up to embarrass us? Only in case we do not believe that which we ourselves have preached. In that case, like the hypocrites, it doesn't matter much what happens to us. God cannot use us and I doubt whether he can save us. It is not the "Negro problem" or the "Japanese problem" that need concern us. It is the "white problem." In every racial group there are two elements. One is suspicious, hasty, violent, vengeful. The other is patient, understanding, moderate, Christian. Only as these second minority groups, intelligently sensitive to dangers, but bravely aware of the practicality of good will, shall come together and control race relationships shall we be able to avoid the catastrophe toward which we are headed. Not much longer can white supremacy be maintained by guns and diplomats. If it is worth maintaining—and there are many who question the sanctity of that obsession—it can rest for security only upon justice, generosity, and mutual respect.

The church dare not wrap about herself the garments of aloofness and stand apart from this conflict. In deserting this battle line she not only escapes from a warm spot, but she abandons her weapons of warfare. If we could only get rid of the New Testament! If Jesus were not so disturbingly radical! If we could only keep the missionary preaching love

while the salesman grabs the market and the soldier protects our manifest destiny, what a nice world it would be for God's chosen white people. But "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

It is only in the spirit of this world unity that the missionary enterprise can be further prosecuted in this modern time. The old day when we went armed with ignorant confidence in the superiority of western civilization is gone. That supercilious superiority is being tested and judged today as backward nations watch our crime lists grow, sit before our sordid movie films, buy their guns and armaments from us, and become the helpless victims of an economic imperialism that is inconsiderate and cruel. More and more the oriental is realizing that unless western Christianity is superior to western civilization and morals, he will cling to his old gods. In former days it was an advantage to be a westerner in the Far East; today one is accepted only as he identifies himself in thought and ideals with the higher life of the nation in which he is laboring.

We cannot carry the conscious attitude of disdain as we mingle with the ancient cultures of other lands. Their customs are different from ours, but their hearts are the same. They may seek for God along paths that are unfamiliar to us, but they are on the same quest along which our feet are pressing. To despise their religion, to seek to uproot their scriptures, to deride their worship is to prove ourselves

unworthy representatives of the Christ who fanned the flame of devotion wherever he found it and encouraged every seeker after truth even when he followed not in his own immediate company. The catholicity of Jesus is an eternal rebuke to our narrow and ungenerous recognition of the good in other religions. I shall never forget a conversation I had with a white-clad Buddhist pilgrim on the side of the road in the island of Shikoku, Japan. For forty days he and his wife had tramped the long trails that led by the shores of the Inland Sea and over the precipitous mountains. They were paying their vows at the eighty shrines of Buddhism along that five-hundred-mile journey. After we had talked in a friendly way for a while, I dared to ask, "Why do you undertake this long, hard pilgrimage to the shrines?" Then came an answer straight and authentic out of the heart of a troubled peasant seeking peace: "No one undertakes this journey, my friend," he said, "unless he has a heart burden." I know. Our paths were diverse, our gods were strangers, but our burden was one.

No longer can missions be carried forward with a sectarian denominational emphasis. Before the tragic needs of a world without Christ our petty divisions seem almost a betrayal of God's love to lost men. They care nothing for the historic causes that have broken Protestantism into a multitude of competitive faiths. Little more do they care for the doctrinal

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debates that have driven apart those who should be one united brotherhood in Christ. And less than all do they care for our outward forms, our polity, and our programs. In faith we must let these newly evangelized peoples build their own church life in the patterns of their own national backgrounds and their own spiritual genius. The non-Christian world needs not our program but our power, not our creeds but our Christ. Out of the wistful heart of India comes a voice pleading, along the lonely mountain trails of old Korea one hears a cry, emerging from the roar and din of industrialized Japan voices are lifted, like the cry of a stricken friend upon the blood-drenched battlefields of China there is a sob and a plea—they are saying to us one word: "Give us Christ or we perish."

"There are lands that are sunk in sin and shame,
There are hearts that faint and tire,
But I know of a Name, a Name, a Name,
Can set those lands on fire."

Jesus talked of a world peopled with exalted personalities, each a son of one Father, all blood brothers in the bonds of a fraternity that overleaps artificial barriers, breaks down nationalistic conceits, exalts separate cultures for the good of all, and makes every man his brother's keeper. Before the church can exercise authority over men, she must get right with God. Along this road of racial adjustment that leads

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to the Christian conception of world unity there lies a cross. We are not today worthy to bear that cross. Only as judgment begins at the house of God shall we, chastened and humbled, lift from his shoulders in his continuing Calvary this symbol which is not only our indictment but our hope, the magnet which alone can draw all men into the one world-wide fellowship for which he prayed.



LOVE AND HUMAN REDEMPTION

Love and Human Redemption

IF one looks deeply into the heart of all that we call life, what would he discover to be its secret? Does there appear any all-determining *motif*? Is there in the rhythmic orbit of the planets and in the invisible protoplasmic structure of physical life any spiritual purpose? And if there should be hypothesized behind this World Process a World Mind, what would be the quality of that Mind? Would it be kind or cruel? Does the universe "mean" good or bad? Into this perplexing quandary the human mind seems to be driven by some irresistible inner impulse. Somehow our own personal lives seem chaotic and futile unless there is discoverable in the world a Purpose consonant with and inclusive of the purposes which drive our individual destinies forward and upward toward moral significance and spiritual distinction.

In the mind of Jesus these questions were answered by a basic certitude. The secret of the universe is love. Back of all this outward, marvelously

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constructed framework we call Nature is the will of a good God. It is created as the home of the spirit, and it is increasingly yielding its infinite secrets for the higher life of mankind. All that science has found, God originally locked in the universe to await man's search. Every scientist who discovers some new and blessed secret in the material world is but "thinking God's thought *after him*." What is explicit in discovery is implicit in creation. No good can come out that God did not designedly put in. "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of." Love is thus the master key of creation. To Jesus "earth was cramm'd with heaven" and every common bush was "afire with God." He would have known the thrill of the poet William Blake when he speaks of the power

"To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour."

Human life was in the eyes of Jesus the supreme earthly manifestation of God. He is forever creating images of himself. Whenever we look into the beautiful face of an innocent child we see "a little bit of heaven." This is original humanity before man has spoiled it. This is God's image as yet unmarred by our bungling hands. This explains Jesus' fervid warning against "despising one of these little ones."

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For he who obstructs or defames a child is a transgressor against God. And unless we discover the secret of becoming like a little child, and thus restoring the untarnished image of his glory in these sin-despoiled human hearts of ours, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. If you seek for the hidden meaning of human life, look deeply into the heart of a little child, and you will find love there and you will hear God's whisper. "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home."

But love is not only manifest in the creative structure of life, it is the regulative test for all human relationships. When the lawyer, seeking an answer to the question that is as old as life itself, asked, "What is the first and greatest commandment?" Jesus did not hesitate a moment. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.*" Here is life's fundamental command. Love God with every capacity that is discoverable within your personality and love your neighbor with the same intuitive ardor that characterizes your love for yourself. "This do and thou shalt live." Is it not possible that in these significant words Jesus not only revealed his own faith in the centrality of love but gave us also the open secret for every personal problem and for every social conflict that presses upon us today?

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I

Let us rapidly review, as in a moving panorama, the place that love occupies in the personal history and public ministry of Jesus. It will make more easily understandable his unwavering trust in its revolutionary power in every relationship of life.

The story of Hebrew origins and history is from beginning to end the moving recital of God's compassion. From that day in the garden when the promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head to the fulfilment of God's promise in Christ, we can understand his purpose only in terms of love. Over the waywardness of a fickle and ungrateful people there comes the refrain, "The eternal God is thy dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms; I have loved you with an everlasting love."

We read the old and blessedly familiar words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," and we realize ever anew that Jesus is God's gift of love to a lost and sinning world. Love must create because to create is the nature of love. No other motive could have made possible Jesus of Nazareth. He came to do the will of the Father, and that will was to interpret to men the ageless, unwavering, sacrificial, redemptive purpose that was in the heart of God. The incarnation has no other adequate explanation than that it is the bodying forth in understandable, human terms of that passion to redeem that

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is ever active in the center of God's nature. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus because he shall save his people."

And thus Jesus rested his whole public ministry upon the power of redeeming love. He came to open the eyes of the blind, to make the lame walk, to heal the broken-hearted, and to set at liberty those that were captive. Why should a man do this except at the behest of love? One of the most beautiful descriptions of Jesus ever written was, "He went about doing good." He chose to believe that there is a redemptive and a creative influence about the mere quality of goodness revealed in human lives. He would win a world not by force or clever strategy but by goodness and active devotion.

It was to these principles that he committed the endeavor to win his first disciples. They must be persuaded that following him was better than catching fish in Galilee. How did he do it? He lived before them a life of love. He cured the sick, he comforted the bereaved, he forgave the sinner, he blessed little children, and the men who companioned with him said, Here is love incarnate and in his face we have seen God. And they were unwilling to leave him because for them ever afterward a new way of life was beckoning and love had become their master. And when they stood by that cross and witnessed his unflinching obedience to the principle of love for which he had lived, they knew that death would only

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immortalize that which it could not destroy, and being lifted up in sorrow and suffering he would draw all men unto himself. Isaac Watts' hymn, which Matthew Arnold calls the greatest Christian hymn ever written, reveals the piercing appeal of that God-man who for our sins died upon the cross:

"See! from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

And this secret of a living and a dying Christ became not a sentimental memory but an active dynamic in building a new society. That which astounded the Roman world was to witness "how these Christians love one another." For Jesus had left a brotherhood among men, and those who were worthy to be called Christians would be united and judged by their love one for another. Here is the distinguishing characteristic of the early Christian community. It was created out of the power of a great unselfish love, its whole scheme of living was posited on mutual affection, its gospel was the word of the cross, interpreting the love of God which offered salvation to all men regardless of creed, color, or nationality. Here they had laid hold upon the secret of their Master and in his name they marched out into a world of hatred and conflict with the shining weapon of the Spirit, the simple declaration that God

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is love. We are discovering that this fact, made luminous in Galilee long ago, is still life's first and last secret, its uttermost and ineffable meaning.

II

If love is thus the nature of God and the constructive agency in human redemption, it seems essential just here that we should be under no delusions regarding its nature, its range, or its operations. We have not always been delivered from narrowing and deadening conceptions of God's love. We shall not get very far until we view that love with open hearts and minds free from prejudice. Several considerations seem inevitable as we study the mind of Jesus.

First, God's love is infinite and universal. This means that we must abandon this idea of "a chosen people" that is to be found all the way from the ancient Hebrews down to our own times. The notion that God looked out upon the world and chose one tribe or one nation as over against another is false to the whole conception of God's character. He did not send his son into the Jewish race because he loved the Jews better than he loved the neighboring Egyptians. No such partiality can be imputed to God. And he has not "chosen" the white race, or America, or the Democratic party, or the Methodist church, or you, or me. This idea of election is abominable, chiefly because it degrades the infinite, universal character of God's love. It ministers to our conceit but

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not to our godliness. The people whom God chooses are the people who choose God. His love is universal, unchanging. When a nation responds to his love, seeks to walk in his ways and accomplish his purposes, then God "chooses" that nation instantly as an instrument for his loving purposes. But when a nation or an individual seeks the ways of pride or selfishness, no prior arbitrary selection of that people or person can reserve for them a place of special privilege. God would not pick out a single race or a few individuals and reveal himself to them to the disregard of all others. He broadcasts, as it were, his love. Those who tune in hear his voice. Those whose instruments of reception are filled with earthly static hear no music but only raucous discord.

And may I add that this idea of a man's being called to preach needs rethinking? God does not look out over the world and pick out a few prophets and priests and preachers and say to them, "Go, preach." Isaiah stood in the temple one day and saw the holy God, and he looked into the deep places of his own heart and then out upon God's children, needy and lost, and he cried, "Here am I; send me." And the Almighty chose him that day. And one day he chose us. We caught a vision of his love, and then we looked away to a broken world, and something stirred within us and we became God's men. But that call never outlasts the vision. When we cease to experience deeply his love and from our

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heart there fades the unwearying concern for a sinful world, then our call fades into the light of common day and our commission is canceled. The validity of a call to preach rests not upon some early ecstatic experience but upon the continuing receptivity of our hearts to the ever active love of God and our burning consciousness of the need of the world.

Another misconception needs to be abandoned. Some people have the idea that God cares for them at some times more than he does at others. Here arises the whole doctrine of "special providences." But God's love never wavers. It is not like our devotion in this respect. It is constant, unvarying. We may be made more conscious of his love at one time than at another. Some deliverance, some flash of truth or beauty, some utter yielding of our hearts, may open doors never before unlocked. But behind those unopened doors his love has ever been; and if in some moment of revelation we have beheld it, our joy and comfort lie in the fact that it does not desert us when the vision recedes. We do not bring God into our lives at some crisis by our importunate pleading. He is there all the time, rescuing the commonplace, lighting the dark road, bearing the heat and burden of our every day. The miracle of spring is not the glory of an apple orchard or of a flame tree against the sky. It is the continuing surge of life within nature that through ebb and flow, through death and

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life, never diminishes but manifests its creative urge alike through the lonely, leafless sentinels of winter and the banners of beauty that fly in the springtime. God is not a capricious temperamental Lover who must be wooed and implored. "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." God's love is unfluctuating, constant, and all life is a providence to them that live according to his purpose. Cast "all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you."

The ultimate and transcendent quality of God's love is seen in its regard for the sinner. The high, elusive meaning of this attitude we have tried to catch in the word "grace." John Henry Jowett devoted a lifetime of preaching to an effort to probe into the depths of the meaning of the love of God. Grace was Jowett's sovereign word, but it could never be defined. The nearest approach that even this master of the pulpit with his spacious vocabulary could make to its hidden meaning was in these words: "Grace is more than mercy. It is more than tender mercy. It is more than a multitude of tender mercies. Grace is more than love. It is more than innocent love. Grace is holy love, but it is holy love in spontaneous movement going out in eager quest toward the unholy and the unlovely, that by the ministry of its own sacrifice it might redeem the unholy and the unlovely into its own strength and beauty." When we love those who love us it is not remarkable,

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but when we return good for evil and love those who refuse and resent our love, then we become like God. For his rain falls upon the just and the unjust, and his mercy is extended to all those who seek his face. Jesus lived this principle as a working theory of life. He loved the outcast, he sought out the lost, he redeemed the useless, he forgave his enemies. Here is love at work at its most potential level. When he sat weeping over Jerusalem, the tears he shed were for a city that had rejected him; when he cried upon the cross, "Father, forgive them," he himself had already forgiven them. When he seeks out Simon Peter after the resurrection, he lays aside all reproach for his treachery and opens the door of hope and life through forgiving love. Here is the heart of the gospel: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, *not reckoning unto them their trespasses.*" Here we behold the mark of God's reconciling love in Christ, who "while we were yet sinners died for us." Here is the "madness and the elevation of the cross" that transfixes our hearts and melts our humbled spirits into trembling response to his unfathomable grace.

"The world is old: she hath seen many wars;
And states and kingdoms crowd her courts like
grass;
Princes in pride she watches where they pass
Unnumbered and innumerable as the stars;
Then turns, a child with tired feet homeward set,
Back to the Cross, and lo! her lids are wet."

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I should like to say one more word here concerning the love of God as it is revealed in the New Testament and in life. It is not a passive attitude but an active force. We often speak of the activity of God as though it were something apart from his essential nature. All God's works are expressions of his innermost self. He does not sit aloft on some celestial throne demanding that men shall love and reverence him. The medieval conception is overpast and gone. The love of God in our world is to be discovered just where men found it in the days of Jesus, in a God who is at work in redemptive service in a world of need. There can be no love in the heart of God that is not continually expressing itself in redemptive efforts in behalf of men, and there can be no such experience as love in our hearts until we express it in active devotion and service to needy men and women around us. Love is not merely a complacent good will; it is an active outreach of the heart to help, to build, to redeem. Is this not what Jesus meant when he said we must take up our cross and follow him? We must love as he loved; we must live as he lived; we must die as he died. But thus losing our lives, we find them, and dying to self and the world we live for others and to God.

III

Far too long has the Christian church regarded with only sentimental wonder this all-embracing fact

of the love of God. It has been one of our most prized emotional escape-mechanisms. We have talked about it as it operated in Galilee and Judea in the first century, but have been a bit chary of its revolutionary possibilities in the twentieth century. We must face up to the demands of love today. Something of the earnest realism of Kagawa with his doctrine of "love in action" must possess us. Is love an available, potential redemptive force in human life and society? I am not asking whether this is a lovely and fragrant theory about which we can preach in our pulpits, but is it an active principle of life and redemption to which we can turn in confidence as we face the frustration of individual character and the moral confusion of human society? That is the biggest question before our world at this hour. I propose now to discuss the use of love as a redemptive and enabling power in the presence of four of the major conflicts of modern life. I shall try to proceed without burdening these pages with proof texts, but at all times endeavoring to keep strictly within the spirit of the basic belief of Jesus concerning the revolutionary action of love.

We must begin with a problem that underlies every other problem—the individual himself. The two major difficulties of our personal lives are sin and suffering. They are universal, poignant, and disorganizing experiences common to humanity. No one of us escapes their disruptive force. What did Jesus

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do and say when faced with the grim reality of these experiences in the life of the people around him? Take sin, for example. How did he cure it? How did he break its power over men and women? The answer is certainly not by moral indifference to it, not by inflicting just penalties, nor demanding atoning good works in proportion to sins committed, nor holding over men the threat of a retributory hell. He broke the power of sin by revealing the moral love of God for the sinner. In the presence of this unmerited love upon the part of God our own hearts melt in penitence and a new resolve to be worthy of that divine compassion springs up within our ransomed spirits. When this experience is genuine it is no superficial adjustment; it is a regeneration which is as marked and epochal in our experiences as the first birth itself. It is made possible by the love which is in the nature of God; it is made explicit and compelling by the cross of Jesus, which is in its essence a graphic way of saying what sin means to God. It is not any theory of the cross that saves us; it is the fact of the cross that redeems. It remains today the supreme manifestation of the redemptive passion in the heart of the Eternal God and the one escape offered our sinful souls whereby we may rebuild the broken walls of our shattered lives and put an integrating center of power into the midst of our dismembered personalities. Love is God's answer to sin.

But what of suffering? Jesus will have little to do

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with the cringing sentimentality with which men frequently face sorrow. He will not evade it, he will meet it "breast forward." It shall not conquer his peace nor impair his courage. Sorrow is born of love. Were there no love there would be no sorrow. Death can exist only in a world of life. But life is greater than death and love is more than sorrow. To him who has enthroned love in his heart, secure and unyielding, sorrow becomes a pathway to power, a road into the city of peace. In the midst of his darkest days Jesus is always talking about joy. In the shadow of the cross he left his peace to his disciples. He looked deep down into the heart of his suffering, and there beheld not defeat but victory. So love, unshaken by adversity, turns sorrow into a song. The great English mystic, Mrs. E. Herman, has caught this secret of Jesus and set it forth in words of surpassing beauty: "To look at sorrow through the eyes of Christ is to transmute it. We ask: What strange magic can turn sorrow into joy? But we ought rather to ask: What joy is this that is fashioned out of the very stuff of sorrow? Not the joy of the laughing child in the buttercup meadow: that passed away as a summer cloud. Not the joy of youth, with the wide world at its feet: that was slain in the hour of trouble and sorrow. It is rather the joy of one reconciled to life, not by shutting his eyes to life's dark things, but by facing them in the depth of his soul and finding God at their center. It is the fruit

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of a peace that is no shallow and selfish calm, no indolent apathy; but the living harmony of a soul at home in God's world, quick to meet the demands of his will, sensitive to the impulses of his Spirit. . . . This is the discovery that awaits us in the midst of the years—the great adventure that gives to the Christian life the dew of eternal youth.”

There is another personal difficulty that confronts the average man. Our personalities lack unity. We find ourselves the center of conflicting inner impulses. One set of circumstances prompt us to one line of action and another to an entirely different or even opposite course. Take the battle within us between justice and mercy in relation to others. What one suggests, the other seems to deny. Or take the conflict that emerges if one takes seriously the implications of the discussions that have just preceded on growth and faith. How long shall we be patient with the imperfect and when shall we strike for the ideal? In dealing with individuals how far shall we trustingly put our confidence in the slow emergence of character? In society and social reconstruction when is radicalism the only true way out of a difficulty? Jesus faced every one of these dilemmas. He found his answer in the unifying and selective power of love. Every course of action must be tested in that tribunal. What would love say? All our actions when they possess the quality of love turn

out to inherently right because faith working through love never fails.

IV

It is in the field of social action, however, that we need to face the operation of this law of love. For here our confusion is deep and widespread. Many will not deny the importance of love as a force in personal living who scorn its application to the social structure. Many of these doubters are simply men of the world who cannot contemplate with enthusiasm the organization of human society upon any principle save that of self-interest and freedom to exploit. But within the circle of Christian leaders themselves voices arise questioning the efficacy of Christian principles in the larger relationships of the social order. Reinhold Niebuhr has recently expounded this view in his striking volume, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. For instance, he says that it is "inevitable that the religious spirit of love should lose some of its force in proportion to the size of the communities which profess it, the impersonal and indirect character of social relations in which it operates, and the complexity of the situation which it faces." He then goes on to add: "The full force of religious faith will never be available for the building of a just society. . . . The cross is the symbol of love triumphant in its own integrity, but not triumphant in the world and society. . . . Society remains man's

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great fulfilment and his great frustration." The view is novel and radical but unconvincing. If the spirit of hate can pass from individual to individual until it can poison a whole community or nation, so can the spirit of good will. If we can marshal by pernicious propaganda the resources of a nation to destroy, the same process, upon a higher level, may incite to the nobler ends of brotherhood. The trouble is we have never really tried to build society on love. Our pessimism is unwarranted until that noble experiment shall have been proven inherently impractical. The Christian church, with all its imperfections, stands today, as it has since the first century, as evidence that men can unite with altruistic devotion to ends greater than their individual interests. The way of love in society may be long and hard, but that admission only incites us by faith to set our adventuring feet upon that high road of social redemption.

The first big challenge to the principle of love in action is the *essentially pagan economic order* in the midst of which we live. The fact that we have until recently accepted it does not make it either right or inevitable. The ethics of Jesus indicts at the bar of judgment our present economic morality. The structural faults of our industrial civilization are not difficult to discover. They were already appearing before they were brought into bold relief by the depression. The fatal malady afflicting us was revealed by three major social facts: first, the growing

bankruptcy of American agriculture and the cultural backwardness of the farmer; second, the failure to raise the real wages of the industrial worker to a saving and cultural level; third, the inability to consume or export what we produced while basic human needs were still unmet, bread lines with granaries bursting with grain. No economic order which has so patently failed in these fundamental areas of the social structure could escape an adverse judgment in the court of economic and human efficiency. This economy cannot be trusted to build with satisfaction and happiness the world of tomorrow.

And it cannot be trusted because it rests upon an unsound foundation. The old economic structure centered around an economic man who sought the maximum of personal advantage in competitive struggle with his fellows. Government stood by with a *laissez faire* attitude and to the victor belonged the spoils, and the devil took the hindermost. Well, that system is doomed. Common sense, communism, and Christianity join hands to declare it no longer tolerable. The judgment of Jesus demands a new deal. A social order must no longer be built upon the predatory, acquisitive instincts of untamed power, but upon the foundations of intelligence, co-operation, and good will. We must take the long view and put ultimate values above immediate ends. Against the morality which grants to the strong the power to rule, it will impose upon the privileged and

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rich the duty to serve the public good. The ideal of Jesus, in which love is central and brotherhood is ultimate, is the only way out of our chaos and confusion. Neither Jesus nor his church in this day is concerned with the details of an economic system. The Christian conscience rightly demands, however, a new economic order in which justice and human values shall be exalted. But to provide such is the function of the state. Our task as Christians is to keep in motion those processes that shall produce a new economic man in whom the law of the jungle shall have been supplanted by the law of love. Our only hope for a just and lasting industrial order rests in our gradual apprehension of the sound economy that underlies the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. Dreams? To be sure. But no more impractical and untenable than the cruel realism which has led us into disillusionment and social despair. The Christian conscience is becoming ominously aggressive about this matter, and there are signs in abundance that a major conflict is not far distant in which the ethics of Jesus shall confront the dominant aims and methods of our present order of society. Stanley Jones says in his recent book what many of us believe: "The present order is doomed. In such a society Christianity is gasping for breath. Christendom will have to pull up its roots from the present pagan order, in which they are embedded . . . or it

will perish." There's the trouble for all of us in that manifesto!

Let us move into another trouble zone. Our world is suffering from *selfish, belligerent nationalisms*. This is no new problem. It confronted Jesus with bitter intensity during his lifetime. The nationalistic mind of Rome was different in kind but not in degree from the bigotry of the Pharisee. These intrenched powers would brook no disturbing agitator such as Jesus. There was a ruthlessness about the world of Jesus' day not unlike the ruthlessness of our own. Jesus combated it. He was constantly judging and opposing the reactionary forces in church and state. He believed that the principles for which he stood were in eternal antagonism to the domineering, enslaving will-to-power of Jerusalem's leaders. When they could no longer disregard him they disposed of him, and in that process gave a perfect example of the nefarious collusion that has too often characterized the church and the state when jointly confronted by a troublesome radical who refuses to go "regular" and who insists on challenging the powers that be.

Our world rings with the hoarse, strident cries of petty nationalisms seeking to establish themselves in power. Old fires of hatred are flaming, nationalistic jealousies are threatening, racial animosities flare, the integrity of treaties is disdained, the whole world is nervous, suspicious. Why all this unrest, this widely prevalent fear? The answer is not far to seek. Na-

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tions are demanding freedom from economic servitude and the destruction of racial barriers which make the good life impossible for their multitudes. Over against this mutinous cry for the good things of life, the dominant victorious nations sit tight in their seats of privilege, controlling their markets, consuming the raw material of dependent nations and keeping them in colonial subjection to the white man's will. A free people cannot be kept in bondage by a stronger nation simply because it has the power to enslave. What folly to have imagined that the Allies could manacle Germany. Her answer is Hitler. Who thinks that Japan can be shut up on her one hundred fifty thousand square miles of mainland with her population showing a net increase of a million a year? Her answer is Manchukuo. The basic conflict in our modern world grows out of the fact that we are striving to carry over into a new day the old nationalistic will-to-power which dominated yesterday. It will no longer function. Great masses of men and women will not be permanently shut out from the higher goods of life. They resent the inequalities of economic circumstances in the modern world. For them the path of remedy has always lain across a battlefield, and they will go that bloody way again unless the spirit of justice, of a square deal for all men, shall lay hold upon the nations. Bertrand Russell says in his last book: "The same causes that produced the war of 1914 are still operative and, unless

checked by international control of investment and raw materials, will inevitably produce the same effect but upon a larger scale."

We shall go plunging into this egotistic struggle, sending our youth into the trenches to protect our markets and make secure the investments of Wall Street, unless we shall sense its hopeless, desperate foolishness and tragedy. Jesus saw the inane stupidity of this process. His way of brotherly love, of mutual co-operation, of a chance for every man, has been for nineteen hundred years scorned by the lordly rulers of the kingdoms of this world. But it still persists. Men blindly struggle after a goal that offers them the abundant life, and no dictator, no armed force, no economic imperialism can keep them from their eventual goal.

It becomes our duty today to see that we who profess the religion of Jesus Christ shall face the consequences of that faith. The church must renounce its unholy loyalty to the *status quo*. It must challenge the tyranny of power used for selfish, nationalistic ends; it must deny and renounce the effort to make it the cat's-paw of the state, the pharisaical cloak for selfish imperialism. When the vindictive diplomat shuts the mind of Jesus out of his council of peace, he must not expect the Christian conscience of the world a few years later to defend the results of his blind folly. We ought to be through bowing to Caesar and serving as "private chaplain to the secular

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state, blessing the state's wars, its imperialism, its nationalistic egoism." Let the church assert again the supreme sovereignty of her universal Savior and his right to govern the whole world. Against every political form of totalitarianism the church must declare the totalitarianism of Him who declared: "All authority hath been given unto me, in heaven and on earth." We may meet on that road the same cross he met, but we shall also win at last the same victory which he won.

Jesus' active principle of love finds itself, finally, in *conflict with the ancient institution of war*. The use of force to accomplish an end is as old as the history of man. Slowly and by painful and costly experience we have been led to consider substituting reason and intelligence for physical force in the settlement of disputes. The arbitrament of brute strength is the law of the forest, of fang and tooth. We are neither better nor wiser than the beasts of the wild when we use, even with superior scientific skill, the same instrument of destruction for deciding an issue.

Fortunately for our guidance today this dependence upon armed force was an actual conflict in the experience of Jesus. It was the military forces of Rome that accomplished his death. Roman soldiers drove the nails through his hands. Roman soldiers insulted him with jeering indignities. A Roman spear pierced his side. The disturbing fact remains that the Son of Man was crucified not alone by the bigotry of in-

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trenched religion but also by the blind brutality of the Roman army. Both of them regarded him as a dangerous man, and even in their stupidity they dimly sensed an eternal conflict between the ideals of Jesus and the system of which they were a part. They undertook to settle that issue on Calvary, but it is still with us today.

It is clear that in the mind of Jesus the whole idea of using force to compel obedience is contrary to the spiritual laws of life. Confronted by the peril to his own personal safety, he told Peter to put up his sword. And then he spoke the word which reveals the underlying error beneath every appeal to force: "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." In other words, a sword in a man's hand destroys not an enemy but the man himself. The very act of taking the sword with the intent to kill is evidence of an inner attitude that is itself the breakdown of personality. To become an effective soldier in time of war I must believe the lies manufactured about my opponent. I must hate him, I must destroy him. I may never have seen him, but he is my enemy. Whenever I consent to let loose in my personality these hellish attitudes of unbrotherliness I have forfeited my right to be a follower of Christ who said: "Love your enemies." Nineteen hundred years, ending with the Marne and Verdun and Versailles, say that he was wrong. Perhaps Jesus is

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wrong, but surely events have not proved that the militarists were right.

"To arms! they cry. But they shall fail
Though arms clash loud and long.
To love! The prophet's dreams avail
Again that blinded throng."

It is not my desire to harrow your sensibilities about this pagan, murderous survival of the jungle that we call war. It threatens today the foundations of civilized society. It is the monster peril of our generation. It completely dominates the present-day relationships of international life. The problem must be solved or civilization is on the road to destruction. You will bear with me while I remind you that ten million of the world's choicest youth lay dead at the end of the World War and that double that number were maimed and wounded; that in 1918 the war was costing nearly a quarter of a billion dollars a day; that last year the nations spent \$4,276,800,000 on armament. In one year, mind you. To build and maintain one battleship for the twenty years of service allotted to it, costs the American people \$250,000,000. For the cost of just one battleship we could build fifty thousand homes each costing five thousand dollars. The contract price of the new battleship "Colorado" is just a little less than the total endowment of Johns Hopkins University. Secretary Mellon admits that our participation in the World War cost

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America \$51,000,000,000. In money, and who shall estimate its cost in forfeited lives, broken hearts, and frustrated hopes? Who wants war? Here and there a misguided politician and always the profiteers. For example, that contemptible international ring known as the munitions makers. A gangster can kill a victim for as little as one hundred dollars. But it cost the government twenty-five thousand dollars to kill a soldier during the World War, and that was one form of extravagance against which the munitions makers did not protest. Killing is their business; armaments are their stock in trade; governments are their customers; and every time a shell fragment finds its way into the brain, the heart, or the intestines of a man in the front line, a great part of the twenty five thousand dollars finds its way into their pockets. At least we have come to the point where only an idiot or a pervert can any longer glorify war. Its motive is economic imperialism, its method is ruthless murder, its outcome is blood and tears, enduring hatreds, and international discord. War *is* and always *will be* hell.

Do we need any longer to be in doubt as to what Jesus thinks of this business? Not in the least! Every principle and every value for which Jesus lived and died is negated by the institution of war. It destroys personality, he builds personality; it enthrones hatred, he magnifies love; it entails misery and tears, he brings men happiness and laughter; it divides hu-

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manity, he unites mankind; war destroys men, he saves men. Between the mind of Jesus and the sword-mindedness of this generation there can be no truce. And no crisis, no national emergency, no right of self-preservation, no obligation of self-defense, no altruistic imperialism can be importuned as an excuse for doing something which in itself and by its very nature is a denial and a crucifixion of love.

War is sin. It is the same kind of sin which put Jesus on the cross. Its continuance crucifies him afresh in every generation. The church must dissociate itself from the war business. We have always opposed war in the abstract and blessed every war in particular. It is not enough to promise ourselves that "we will never bless another war." Our commission as followers of the Prince of Peace is to wage active and relentless opposition to the whole system, to refuse to participate in its activities or to condone its methods. Ten years ago General Bliss said bluntly: "The responsibility for another war is entirely upon the professing Christians of the United States. If another war like the last one should come, they will be responsible for every drop of blood that will be shed and every dollar wastefully expended." I accept the challenge. The churches have sufficient power to make it impossible for their government to wage war. More than that. They have sufficient power to see that their government wages peace, that we shall not only talk peace but act peace. For myself I renounce

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war as sin, as the counterpart of the gospel of love, as the Antichrist of modern times. As a Christian I must choose between Christ and war.

"Such is my faith, and such
My reasons for it, and I find them strong
Enough. And you. You want to argue? Well,
I can't. It is a choice. I choose the Christ."

V

Professor Whitehead says: "As society is now constituted a literal adherence to the moral precepts scattered throughout the Gospels would mean sudden death." Adherence to them meant death to the founder of the Christian faith. In the World War a million men were crucified in a vain attempt to make the world safe for democracy. What, I wonder, would happen if a million men dared to die to make the world unsafe for despotism? I have seen in Asia and Europe evidences of the graves of a host of Christian martyrs who suffered a violent death because they opposed Caesar and followed Christ. But they gave us the Christian church. Unless the church in our day shall detach itself from subservience to the secular order and revoke its blanket commitment to the policies of the state, we shall have no vital faith to hand on to our children.

The day has come for a new pattern in the Christian church. Our shallow complacency must perish. If the world in which we live makes impossible the

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practice of the ethics of Jesus, we must change the conditions surrounding us. Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison says: "We confront this serious dilemma: either we must turn away from Christ as an impractical sentimentalist, or we must find another strategy for expressing our discipleship." The realization of this alternative is behind the new and solemnizing sense of realism that is coming to this generation of Christians. We have been diligent students of the Sermon on the Mount, now we are confronted with the revolutionary task of making a world in which it shall have a chance to be put into practice. Individual conversions are not enough. Society itself must be redeemed. Once again the cross challenges life, and love is in mortal combat with the forces of death. The issue involves the destiny of humanity and the future of the Christian church. The startling realism of Elizabeth Cheney's poem, "There Is a Man on the Cross," indicts us and incites us to sacrificial endeavor:

"Whenever there is silence around me
By day or by night—
I am startled by a cry.
It came down from the cross. . . .
The first time I heard it,
I went out and searched
And found a man in the throes of crucifixion,
And I said, 'I will take you down!'
And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.

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But he said, 'Let them be,
For I cannot be taken down
Until every man, every woman, every child
Come together to take me down.'
And I said, 'But I cannot hear you cry.
What can I do?'
And he said, 'Go about the world,
Tell everyone that you meet
There is a man on the cross.' "

My final plea is that we shall bring love down out of the clouds and place its feet on the highways of our life; that we shall no longer regard it as a haloed sentiment but an active dynamic. To Jesus love was strength, power, victory. So it may be to us. Today there is in Japan a Christian who believes in it as the supreme regenerating force in life. Why should Kagawa be so notable an exception to the great multitude of Christians throughout the world? It is not Kagawa that impresses one. It is the incarnation in one human life of the deathless, dauntless power of love, speaking, suffering, daring, dying that men may be redeemed and society may be saved for God. He is pointing a way and it turns out to be His way.

We have tried everything else. At long last why not try love?

HIMSELF AND HIS RELATION TO GOD

Himself and His Relation to God

A MOOD of uncertainty and confusion has settled from many different directions upon our generation. In the presence of certain marked world phenomena we are hesitant and baffled. The last quarter of a century has brought new scientific data that are literally creating "a new heaven and a new earth." The human individual has been analyzed and "psychologized" until we are beginning to discover "why we act like humans"—or refuse so to act. The social structure has been the field of endless investigations and surveys resulting in many novel experiments and theories. All the while over our troubled world there has been brooding a spirit of disillusionment, sharpened by exceptional economic prostration and international unrest. The peaceful, stable world, "lapt in universal law," of which we dreamed in 1918 has not arrived. Many of the ideas we held about the necessary progressive evolution of human society toward a better order of life have been abandoned

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in the presence of the hard, incontrovertible facts of stagnancy and dismay.

It is inevitable that this feeling of unrest should drive men to examine their philosophy of life. For the man in the street, with all his indifference to organized Christianity, is still under the necessity of finding a satisfactory theory of God and man and of the universe in general. And in times of strain and readjustment he is even more insistent upon discovering a stable basis for faith in some Ultimate Reality which satisfies his heart and steadies his trembling universe. If what Maude Royden says is true, that "the value of any religion to humanity is simply the value of its God," then the Christian faith in this generation is confronted with the urgent necessity of resolving its confusion regarding the nature and the activity of God and his relationship to this human drama and to the actors upon the stage of our contemporary life. A reviewer in a recent issue of a well-known Christian journal voices this prevalent demand in exact words: "In the jangle of voices at present to be heard within the field of religion, one note occurs with peculiar unison: the cry for a doctrine of God that shall give meaning to our world and to personal experiences and shall also provide inspiration to moral endeavor and spiritual elevation. Desperately do we need a theology that not only will be permitted by our contemporary scientific outlook but will actually issue from it; that likewise will do full

justice to the needs and the deliverances of our aesthetic, moral, and religious natures. The demand arises from both practical and theoretical interests, from the requirements of a life that would be worthily human and from the fact that without God we cannot hope to comprehend anything else."

I have a profound conviction that this search will gather around the person of Christ. For nineteen hundred years he has been the creative center of men's outreach after God. He has been found in the most important sector of every theological conflict. The atheist, intent upon getting rid of God, is confronted by the disturbing rejoinder, "What will you do with Jesus?" The materialist must pause to place this spiritual genius somewhere in his mechanistic scheme, for he knows that, unless he can dispose of Jesus, the tables may be turned and Jesus will dispose of him. In his apologia for writing his brilliant volume, *Jesus, Man of Genius*, Middleton Murry confesses: "The time had come when it had become urgent upon me *to make up my mind about Jesus.*" It is a strange fact that this same haunting necessity confronts every man who thinks deeply about life and its meaning. Jesus seems to hold the key to the mystery within us and around us. In any event he remains central in the whole field of religious thought and we must "make up our minds about Jesus."

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I

We have witnessed in our day evidences of widespread vagueness concerning the nature and the person of Jesus Christ. We are more clever than we are profound. It is disconcerting to read from some eminent and widely influential preachers sermons dealing with Jesus that register an uncertainty about this central doctrine of historic Christianity. In reality these contemporary leaders may hold this central faith, but they are too cautious to admit it in the presence of an audience that is liberal in thought or obsessed by the modern viewpoint. They may hold the view in its essentials, but refuse to use the old terminology, and in this fashion take refuge behind phrases of dubious meaning while they negotiate for a more satisfying approach. Some will refuse to refer to Jesus as "divine" because they do not know what "divinity" means, and they decline to be drawn into a game of logomachy over the difference between "divinity" and "deity." These men are not any less able, less conscientious, less earnest for the Kingdom of God than their predecessors, such as Liddon, Westcott, Forsythe, Fairbairn, Bushnell, Simpson, Mackintosh, and others. But about these earlier apologists there is one overwhelming fact that confronts us: they were in no doubt regarding the unique place which they attributed to Jesus as the divine Son of God. They were not quibbling over definitions or terminology; they intended to use the whole Chris-

tian vocabulary if necessary to make convincingly definite their faith in a Divine Redeemer. Such clarity is in deep contrast with the vagueness of much modern liberal preaching. In fact, one feels as if he had passed out of the blazing light of day into a somber twilight. If this difference of view were merely a matter of theological interest, it would hold only academic importance for our generation. But it is determinative in the gospel message. Our preaching is centered around Christ, and vagueness concerning this fundamental issue, revealing itself in life and preaching, brings an air of indecisiveness into the life of the Christian church that is fatal to her mission in the world. The layman may well say as he listens to much modern preaching: "If the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" Edwin Lewis in his recent volume has declared that "the restoration of Jesus Christ to his rightful place in the faith of the church and because of that to his rightful place in the life of the world" is the most urgent need before us today. I verily believe that to be true, and it is in the interest of that need that these words are written.

We can best understand a result when we survey the processes which lead up to it. Undoubtedly certain emphases in our modern thought and life have contributed to the diminution of the uniqueness and authority of Jesus. But before these are mentioned several considerations must be clearly taken into ac-

count. No single one of the factors listed below is responsible. The pressure has been generally atmospheric. And no one should impute to any of these elements a desire or purpose to detract from the pre-eminence of Jesus. On the other hand most of them have confessedly desired to rescue him from obscurantism and idolatry and give him a place in the universe which as an affront neither to devotion nor reason. The result, none the less, has been to displace the exclamation point behind the name of Jesus and supply in its place a big question mark.

What are these forces in our present world that have contributed to the confusion over the question of the person of Jesus? Candor must carry us to the first factor, and that is our unspiritual emphasis upon materialism. A generation submerged in the egotistic pursuit of pleasure and gain could hardly understand or accept so lofty a spiritual doctrine as the deity of Jesus. They do not so much deny it as they regard it as a matter of indifference. The glory that shone in the face of Jesus Christ is to them a strange glory, and they have no human category in which to put him. It is highly probable that Jesus would be arrested as a disturber of the peace if he should appear in the midst of our American scene. The knowledge of the children of this world is bounded by this earth and transient interests, hence they stumble on into a confused embarrassment. Humanism and modern psychology have just about

bowed God out of the universe and enthroned man as a tawdry substitute.

The second contributing force is historical criticism. To this process we are deeply indebted. It has validated our Scriptures, and placed Jesus in his historic environment in such a manner as to help greatly toward the understanding of his words and his life. For a quarter of a century this method of examining and evaluating literary sources has occupied the center of attention in scholarly circles. The result has been inevitable. Much of the biblical source material upon which the older apologists depended for proof has been called in question and cast out as evidence. It was inevitable that in the minds of many this should discredit the fact of Christ. The critic, however reverent he might be, directed attention not upon Jesus but upon the literary sources of his historical appearance. If gradually biblical scholarship cut away many of the major portions of the Bible picture of the Master, it is not strange that it produced a questioning appraisal of the Nazarene. And even though in its most drastic forms it still left a creditable residuum of literary evidence for the life of Jesus, it must be confessed that if our finally dependable source material for the picture of Jesus is found mainly in a document called Q and that has been lost, we may also lose something of the assurance we once held regarding the Figure who inspired that literature by the splendor of his earthly life.

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All this may be unfortunate and low-minded, but it is nevertheless a fact. Even though it is resented from the standpoint of scholarship, it cannot be denied from the standpoint of psychology.

Furthermore, the prevalent emphasis upon the scientific method of arriving at truth and the widely current new knowledge in the material world have tended to undermine the form if not the fact of our ancient belief. Science has held the field. Religious thinkers everywhere were scurrying to safeguard faith by declaring that it was not in conflict with science. That accomplished, they were sure that everybody would believe. We were willing to throw the miracles out of the Bible, discount the stories of the nativity, allocate Jesus to an exalted place in the evolution of the race, and in consequence rejoice that these concessions gave us a high rating with the savants and the intellectuals. The results have been no more gratifying to the scientists than to the preachers. They cannot explain Jesus, nor can they explain Socrates or Shakespeare or John Doe. We have foolishly yielded our citadel to a group of warriors who do not know how to occupy it. For the scientist knows processes but not origins; he knows the laws of matter but not the movements of the spirit. In his *Will to Believe* William James says: "To no one type of mind is it given to discern the totality of truth. Something escapes the best of us—not accidentally but systematically because we have a

twist. Facts are there only for those who have a mental affinity with them. . . . In psychology, physiology, and medicine, whenever a debate between the mystics and the scientists has been once for all decided, it is the mystics who have usually proved to be right about the *facts*, while the scientists had the better of it in respect to the *theories*." We are regaining our poise and discovering that the laboratory doesn't have the last word about Jesus and that faith and reason are both necessary to apprehend him. The saint may again prove to be the best theologian.

Finally, the emphasis upon the ethical significance of Jesus, so widely popular today, has tended to divert attention from his essential nature as Redeemer and Lord. The recovery of the historical Jesus has been accomplished by an intensive study of his ethical standards. With other moralities being daily discredited, men turn afresh to the Sermon on the Mount for an answer to life's complexities. Jesus deeply understood and interpreted life. He became the author of a new and higher philosophy of living, the great Teacher and the great Example. Now all this is true, but it is neither all the truth about Jesus nor the main truth. It does not raise the deeper issue as to how this Galilean carpenter came to be the world's flawless moral guide. Nor does it reckon with the fact that if all Jesus has to offer men is a dazzling ideal, with no power to attain, he is the Tormentor, not the Savior, of the souls of men. There is in our modern

world a growing sense of the inefficiency of the merely ideal. John Mackay has it right when he says: "The imitation of him as our ideal is not the heart of the Christian faith. Jesus is not only the ideal which we must aspire to; he is also and much more the reality which we receive into our lives and from which we start." In making the ethical import rather than the essential nature of Jesus supreme we have chosen the good rather than the best.

All the attitudes discussed in the foregoing paragraphs have characterized modern liberal thought. We were all enamored of their rather startling meanings and felt that in freeing ourselves from the older traditional views we were at last on the road to the truth. But in recent days we have been less certain. Men are talking and writing of the "collapse of liberalism" and asking "Can liberalism survive?" What has thrown this disconcerting doubt into the ranks of modern liberal thought? The answer is based on an important discrimination. Liberalism as a method is secure and inevitable. In this respect it stands side by side with the scientific method. As a process of thought, as a way of arriving by inductive experimentation at the truth, impassively and objectively considered, it is a permanent gain and is not likely to be superseded. But the difficulty with liberal theology has been *that the presuppositions which it carries over into its process are proving to be of questionable validity.*

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To the credit of Karl Barth be it said that he has devastatingly revealed the superficialities of much of our modern liberal theology. These shortcomings are being pointed out today by a host of writers, by no means the majority of whom are traditionalists. Take for example the doctrine of man. Our modern view is fundamentally different from that of our fathers. They looked upon man as the subject of redemption; saw ahead of him his eternal destiny as a child of God, but he knew that of himself he could never attain this salvation and glory. Out of his miserable condition of sin he could rise only by the grace of God. Our liberal theologians do not think so meanly of the human race. They trust the fundamental goodness of human nature and talk about "the soul of culture being the culture of the soul." What man needed was not a transforming experience from an utterly transcendent source but rather an unfolding of the latent powers within him. Regeneration was out of date, giving place to self-expression and the "development of personality." Progress was the law of the centuries, and this progression came as a result of man's "creativity." Our fathers looked to sources beyond themselves for help; we have been turning to our own inward resources. Thus an entirely new doctrine of man has grown up in modern thought.

This has necessitated a new idea of God. He was no longer transcendent but immanent. No longer

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above us but within us. In the place of God as Sovereign we put God as Companion. We loved to think that he could not get along very well without our assistance, and so we decided to help him build his world. Thus the way to find God was to serve him. This view also carries a new doctrine of salvation. Our idea is that men seek and find God by faith. Our fathers held that God seeks and finds men by grace. "By grace are ye saved and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God." It is inevitable that the result of all this is a new Christology. We have been so concerned to identify Christ with our human categories that we have pictured him as a religious genius rising by the power of his moral idealism and his sacrificial suffering to the level of a god, yea, even of God himself. The older view held that God supremely revealed himself to our world in Christ and that Jesus' perfection was essential and his nature divine because all the fulness of the Father dwelt in him. God was in Christ and while he was here on earth he was God who had become flesh. Not flesh that became God, but God that became flesh.

Barth by no means stands alone in challenging these modern views. There are many signs of a changed outlook in the theological world. We are being summoned to a restudy of the very bases of Christian theology. We have been obsessed with certain passing intellectual fashions, and we are beginning to discern that we are in danger of losing the peculiar

genius of our faith. It is not intelligence in religion against which we are inveighing; it is the too easy acceptance of a current mundane philosophy which conditions intelligence and predetermines the conclusions which are reached. We have no quarrel with liberalism as such. Its weakness is not in itself but in its presuppositions and in its inconsistencies. It has given us a theology whose center is man, not God; a world in which progress was integral and resistless; a conception of sin as a "missing of the mark" rather than a revolt against God; an ideal of altruistic service, rather than repentance and faith, as the road to salvation; a goal of a future utopia that will come out of man's progressive discovery of higher values; a conception of God not as an Absolute Other but as an Immanent Ally; a picture of Christ growing into the flower of perfection of manhood rather than the Incarnate Mediator of God to our broken humanity.

One does not need to be either a fundamentalist or disciple of Karl Barth to admit freely the questionableness of these current philosophies. In fact, the very times in which we live cry out against their inadequacy. The World War cracked our self-sufficient complacency, and the aftermath of that struggle has just about completed the process of making us humble again. The encouraging sign is that we are reopening the subject for study, and in our search for certainty we have abandoned our cock-

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sure dogmatism. We are being driven deeper to be forced to climb higher. Let me insist again that these modern, liberal approaches are not to be ruthlessly discarded. They are not false so much as they are partial and inadequate. They need to be integrated into a larger whole which awaits today the constructive thought of the liberal, evangelical mind.

II

The New Testament view of Jesus is not difficult to discover. Each of the Synoptists has a purpose and writes as he is guided by that purpose in his treatment of the facts of history. What we have here, with all their variations, are pictures of Jesus as the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, the man of action and power, and the kindly humanitarian Savior moving among the universal needs of humanity. These first three Gospels are not metaphysical or doctrinal; they are factual. But the character they present is unified and commanding. Matthew includes what is perhaps the clearest instance of a claim of divine sonship upon the part of Jesus. "At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the

Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."

The fourth Gospel, written from a doctrinal and apologetic standpoint, is not so quickly accepted as evidence in scholarly circles, and yet its testimony cannot be lightly cast aside. Here the view that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," is clearly and with unmistakable sincerity set forth. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." St. Paul carries on the idea when he speaks of God who has "shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Hebrews adds: "God hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son the effulgence of his glory and the very image of his substance." And his mediatorial mission is suggested by the Scripture: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." However active the nature of our modern questioning about Jesus may be, the New Testament writers were sure of their ground.

That Jesus believed his sonship to God to be unique and essential and his appearance on earth to be a part of the cosmic purpose of an All-Loving Father whose complete nature he shared—of these conclusions there can be no reasonable doubt. And this conception of Jesus continued and became the dynamic faith of the early Christian church. The gospel of the Divine

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Son of God, living in time, dying on a cross, "alive forever more," captured the church of the first century and subdued the paganism of those ancient days. On through the years he has possessed this strange compelling power. Truly here we are face to face with a remarkable phenomenon, and it demands some satisfying explanation.

The explanation called for may be made, and is being made, by describing Jesus in terms of our human categories. He is presented as the highest product in our human evolution, an exceptional man of genius, who is so completely and radiantly responsive to God—to beauty, truth, and goodness—that for all practical purposes he is God. He stands for the God-idea in human life. He lives on in the race because he incarnated such ultimate and final conceptions of personal value that we are unable or unwilling to let him die, "To the wisdom of the perfect teacher in him was added the love of the perfect brother." There is no structural difference between the human and the divine; there is no fundamental chasm between time and eternity. The immanence of God, which is partial and fragmentary in us, is effulgent and complete in Jesus. This may be said to encompass fairly the conception of Christ implicit in much of our liberal Protestant preaching today. Is it adequate? Is it satisfying? Is it true?

Let us examine this liberal view from the standpoint of its effect upon certain cherished convictions

which are widely held. We are not contending that the view is false because it overturns our ideas, but we are at least insisting its proponents face certain intellectual and moral consequences which must be frankly faced if their view should prevail. In the first place, the straight line of development in Jewish religion leads inevitably to Jesus through an evolutionary process that began under Moses. The end or *telos* of Judaism is found in Christianity. Is this result a mere accident of a developing historic process, or is there to be discovered "a conscious planning agent" who wrought through prophet and priest to bring about the spiritual redemption of the world through a "greater than Moses"? In other words, does this process imply revelation, a Mind working through history to unfold itself ultimately in clearness and power? The answer to that question hinges on your conception of Jesus. If he is merely a startling, unpredictable "emergent" appearing by accident at the end of a spiritual process that could not produce him, then we must rethink the whole story of revelation. Hebrew history would in this case reveal no gracious Will working toward a progressive spiritual destiny for the race.

Another question arises. How can the New Testament still retain its credibility, with or without historical criticism, if the conception of Jesus therein portrayed is discovered to be the product of an emotional and irrational enthusiasm upon the part of a

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group of men whose minds were a jumble of messianic hope and apocalyptic expectation? If the writers of the New Testament are not, on the whole, credible witnesses to the nature and person of Christ, then the whole tissue of their story falls to pieces and the dependability of the record is gone. The figure of Christ created the literature of the first century. He fills it with perennial meaning. If you take Jesus out of that picture, you still have left on your hands the task of explaining the literature that his personality created when he lived among men and persuaded them that he spoke as "*never man spake*." If Jesus is only a man approximating divinity in the singular purity of his life, then the trustworthiness of the New Testament record is invalidated by its inner contradictions. A cause must be potentially commensurate with the result that flows from it. The result here is unique and epochal.

This lower view confronts another dilemma. It must deal with the total character of Jesus. We are all agreed that the ethical and spiritual ideals of Jesus were solitary among men and that he embodied those ideals in his personal character so completely that he was the best credential of his teaching. In this respect he is singular among men. But it is no less certain that he believed that he sustained a unique relationship to God. He quietly claimed sinlessness, he asserted his right to absolve the heart from sin, he affirmed his oneness with God and promised to

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occupy the place of God in the lives of all his disciples to the end of time. Now Jesus may have been mistaken in all these matters, but they are undoubtedly the ideas of one who conceived of himself in every essential relationship as God. Either he was correct in his supposition, or he was deluded, or he was insincere. We reject the last possibility instantly. In the preface to his *Back to Methuselah*, G. Bernard Shaw says: "Better by far declare the throne of God empty than set a liar and a fool on it." That he could have been harboring a delusion seems difficult of belief. The ages would have punctured that self-deceit long since. The answer seems unavoidable: Jesus must have been what he and his disciples thought he was: a unique revelation in humanity of the Absolute and All-Loving God.

Finally, the humanistic conception of Jesus strangely robs him of power over men. The New Testament knows nothing of Jesus as a dynamic personality such as we are wont to describe him. To them he was not a hero, a thinker, a reformer, nor the founder of a religion. He was the One who was "born of David's offspring by natural descent, and installed as Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness, when he was raised from the dead." This explains the central place they gave to his death and resurrection. These were the seals of his mediatorial office and the assurance of salvation to everyone that believeth. The deep cry of the human heart is not

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for an Example but for a Savior, not for an ethical ideal but for a gospel of grace.

"O Man of the far-away ages,
O Man of the far-away land,
More art thou than all the sages,
More art thou than creed or command.
To crown thee we need but to know thee,
We need but to live thee to prove;
Nor time nor decay can o'erthrow thee,
Humanity's ultimate love."

III

For fear you may conclude that this rebuttal to liberalism will land us hastily in the arms of an uncritical literalism, it is expedient at this point to refute certain claims upon which the conservative theologian often bases his argument for the deity of Jesus. We do not believe Jesus divine because of the "mighty works" which he did. No contention based upon the miracles has much weight today. The fact is, we do not know much about miracles. Our enthusiasm for a consistent natural order has put them in bad repute. And yet we are less and less certain about the fixity of natural laws. It may be that God has at his command innumerable laws which we do not comprehend through which for worthy moral ends he may control lower laws and in no way disrupt his orderly universe. But in any event, miracles can never prove divinity. They belong in different categories. Miracles, whatever they may be, are an evi-

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dence of unusual power, but no such material test can be superimposed on the inward quality of life involved in the question of deity. The criterion regarding the power of Christ must rest in the realm of the soul's final reality, the realm of life and experience. Works, miracles, mighty deeds are meaningful only as they are authenticated by a moral power which is always in subjection to the higher demands of goodness.

And not even that solemn and august mystery we call the Virgin Birth—granted for argument's sake that the record in the Gospels is ample and trustworthy—can convince us of the deity of Jesus. The difficulty here also is that the proof upon which we are depending makes the nature of a spiritual personality dependent upon physical rather than moral categories. If there were no references in all the Scriptures to such an exceptional advent, the argument for his divine nature would not be compromised. The Virgin Birth is an interesting subject of controversy, but it is no part of a final proof that Jesus was or was not the divine Son of God. We must seek a deeper foundation for faith than the nature of his physical advent. "It is the cross and not the cradle that has the secret of the Lord."

Nor am I willing to admit that the intuition of countless multitudes of Christians, testifying to the glowing inward conviction of the divinity of Jesus, is sufficient evidence. We are tempted to fall into

wish-thinking, an ideology that has about it all the marks of truth but which in fact lacks historic root-age and verification. Jesus Christ is a figure not only of experience but of history, and we must not create a subjective, imaginary Christ, uprooted from his historic manifestation, and then put on his brow the diadem of divinity. Intuition must always be checked and balanced by facts and history, and reason must go hand in hand with faith. Such intuition, lying deeper than and distinct from reason, may be a convincing argument, but it can never be a final demonstration.

Much of our difficulty in the discussion of the nature of Christ comes from confusion over terms. What do we mean by "divinity"? Does it differ from "deity"? In what sense is Jesus "one with God"? All these questions lead us into metaphysics, where few of us are at home and all of us are willing to use terms to hide our ignorance rather than reveal our knowledge. Every discussion of the person and nature of this perennial Figure betokens in its language and imagery the age in which the disputants live. When the Nicene Creed was formulated it was the result of an historic debate that centered around the question of the "substance" of God and Jesus. Of course neither side knew what "substance" meant, but they used it as a term to set the stage for their argument. Athanasius contended that Jesus was of the *same* substance as God. Arius argued that he

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was of *like* substance with the Father. Who knows whether "spirit" can have "substance"? Athanasius won the day and Arianism became a heresy. The terms they used seem to us scholastic and unreal. At any rate, a whole new universe of thought has come into being since A.D. 325. And yet devout and earnest people are still trying to set Jesus down in the thought forms of the fourth century. We know nothing of the essential nature of God. "God is a spirit." We can understand him only in his acts and attitudes. It is not given to us in the flesh to understand the nature of spirit. "No man hath at any time seen God." We cannot see God, nor can we understand his nature and substance. "Now we see in a mirror, darkly." Therefore, to rest the proof of the deity of Jesus upon our contention that he is *identic in substance* with God the Father is simply to make assertions about something of which we know nothing and land ourselves in an indefensible position.

All life and history teach us that the moral is the real, and the Great Reality must be morally conceived as he is morally revealed. We do know, in this sense, something about the *character* of God. "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." Even apart from Jesus we can form a conception of God's essential character; with Jesus

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giving us his picture, the outlines grow clear and satisfying. Our task, therefore, seems to be to ask whether Jesus and the Father are one or not in substance but in fundamental character. If God is "dramatizing himself in Jesus" and the Infinite is becoming, for our sakes, finite, then we can behold in the face of Jesus the image of the Invisible God. And we may leave to the metaphysicians the realms that transcend our human understanding.

IV

It now becomes our task to examine this identity of purpose and will which we find in God and Christ. It is to be conceded that the unity must be complete and absolute, or the argument breaks down. For all of us are "broken lights" of God, partial revelations, but he only is "the effulgence of his glory" in whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Only in the full identity of purpose and life do we find the final answer. If Jesus is in the flesh all that God is in spirit, then the two must be one in the sense that will permit us to use the term "deity" of both with conclusive accuracy. Only on this level can we in this day answer the question, "Is Jesus divine?"

The age-long search after and effort to understand God has not left us in darkness. In our best moments we do know what we want God to be in relation to a world and to a single soul within that world. There is an unmarshaled consensus of opinion that any

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God worthy of the universe and its potentialities must possess the following characteristics: He must be Absolute, Universal, Creative, Good. Within the compass of these qualities we may believe that the Spiritual Reality whom we call "God" will be found. We press on now to ask: Are these the traits, in a unique and final fashion, of Jesus? Does he utterly correspond to God in all these high and determinative levels?

Take *absoluteness*. Jesus is the founder of a new cosmic order. His entrance into life constituted a "crisis" that was as marked as a new geologic age. He is "the most striking and significant personality ever born into this world." To call him the culminating and most reconstructive fact in humanity is not religious bias, but the verdict of history itself. Lecky reminds us that the short years of his ministry did more to elevate humanity than all the disquisitions of the philosophers and moralists since time began. Harnack says that the life of this "one Person raised all history to the plane of a cosmical movement." He stood in a unique relation to the living God. A genius may be repeated but Christ never. His personal identity with God, his foundational relationship to God as Son, distinguish him as standing absolute, "*first born* among many brethren." In like manner his teaching is absolute. He declared God, and not simply the truth about God. He transcended all ancient words and authorities by his sim-

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ple "I say unto you." His suffering and death were facts of cosmic power and hold values of release and redemption unique in the history of all religions.

This absoluteness may be checked, if we desire, along lines congenial to modern thought. We believe in evolution, the gradual unfolding of a creative purpose in and through life. Prof. Lloyd Morgan calls this process "the steplike advance with the sudden appearance of new characters." The long climb proceeds with three main progressive stages, the atom, the organism, the person. If personality is the culminating end of this evolutionary process, no fair-minded reader of history can deny that Jesus Christ is personality's ultimate embodiment in human history. Beyond him we can conceive no greater goal after which to struggle. He is humanity's last and perfect achievement. And it is the scientist himself who says: "If an impartial historical survey should lead to the conclusion that the *nisus* toward deity has culminated in one unique individual, there is, so far as I can see, nothing in the naturalistic interpretation of emergent evolution which precludes the acceptance of this conclusion." He further admits that "the Divine Personality shines through the unique individuality of the Christ." There is nothing else like Jesus in the universe.

The final verification of the absoluteness of Christ must come in the realm of life and experience. It is not philosophic absoluteness, but moral absolute-

ness of which we are thinking. Christianity is one of many faiths. But Christianity is differentiated from other religions by a qualitative rather than a quantitative element. It is not a question as to whether there is more truth or less error in the Christian religion than in the other contenders for the world's faith. The inquiry is a more daring and presumptuous one than that. It is whether there is a finality about the work of Christ which makes his mediatorial, redemptive mission sufficient for all men for all time. Other religions bring men truth; Christianity brings men a Life. Other religions give men the truth about God; Christianity gives men God himself—the living God to living men. This is absolute, final, the ultimate answer to the soul's universal need.

In Christ we behold the whole and holy self of God. If we try to imagine what a full and complete revelation of God would be, we turn at once to Christ and assert that such a revelation is an event not of fancy but of fact. He is not *a* revelation of God but *the* revelation of God. The revelation is not partial but complete; not alone in time but in eternity. The final proof of this rests, let us admit, in the realm of experience. "The fulcrum of any vital doctrine about the person of Christ must be an experimental faith in him as a Redeemer." The man on the street knows not the inwardness of this process and hence cannot be reached by this argument. But those of us who have found in the historic Christ

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a present Savior, those of us who discover in him not an approach to God, but God himself, we know whom we have believed with an unswerving certainty that neither life nor death can shake. In finding Christ we have found God, and in Christ Jesus we have a gracious God who is at once the judge of our consciences and the savior of our sinful souls.

Take now the cognate truth of *universality*. As God has been freed from the tribal limitations of early history and become "one God and Father of mankind," so Jesus is no longer the Hebrew prophet but in verity and fact the "Son of Man." All the limitations of his background are gone; the clinging folds of race and culture and time have all been dropped from his shoulders and he stands before us Universal Man. The ends of the earth turn to him because his complete identity with humanity makes him the brother of every man. Dr. Wieman goes so far as to make this power of Jesus to identify himself organically with humanity the evidence of the presence of God in him. If God is in all men, in their yearnings, their struggles, their bafflements, and their victories—and we believe he is—Jesus will also be found structurally and organically related to mankind. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "Whosoever doeth the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister." This spiritual unity of all men came to a focus in him, and Jesus "lived

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out this organic unity with other men as no one else has ever done." Here is the enduring basis of his universality. He identified himself with man as man and in him mankind sees itself in ideal and challenging perfection. He is the world's Everyman. He belongs to humanity, and because he bore humanity's cross and conquered death for every man, he becomes the world's Savior from sin and Guarantor of life everlasting.

Let us examine *creativity* as a mark of God. When science comes to the end of its study of processes and laws it pauses, with more reverence now than formerly, and posits a creative Will and Intelligence behind this outward material universe. There must be a Mind at work in electron and in planet, in a poem and in a personality. We speak of that Power as God. Now we believe that creation is a continuing process, beginning in the aeons of antiquity and continuing into the limitless stretches of eternity. God is the Eternal Creator. The goal and final purpose of creation is character, godlikeness, sons of men who are sons of God. This creative urge flames alike in Jesus. No wonder he could say, "My father worketh even until now *and I work.*" For he came to rescue, to build up, to redeem. That continuing passion to create characterized his whole ministry. Here a little child that needed to be inspired, here a broken heart needing comfort, here a sin-bound soul crying for release, here a chained personality inhibited by fear

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and seeking forgiveness—all down those golden years of God he went building and restoring men and women. It was unfailing instinct that led him into these ministries of helpfulness. Build persons and you build a world. Create creative personalities and you are building eternal habitations for the souls of men. The remarkable fact is that this process is still going on. He furnishes today the motivation for every philanthropic and redemptive project the world over, and our efforts, religious or merely social, gain a new authority when done “in his name.” If the end of creation is personality and the goal of personality is the good life, then Jesus is the master builder whose inspiriting love is the balm of our faltering hearts and the strength of our straining wills.

The creative power of Jesus may be viewed from another angle. Modern science has revealed to us in its study of man the main motives which stir the heart and will of human beings. These may be detailed as three: the *egoistic*, beginning with a desire for self-preservation and ending with an urge for immortality; the *socializing*, beginning with the herd instinct and culminating in a desire for the Good Society of brotherhood; the *creative*, starting with the sex-instinct and attaining at last the sacrificial desire to suffer, to create a good world. Does Jesus meet and challenge these fundamental urges of humanity and harness them to the good life? To ask

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that question is to answer it. Jesus creatively touches each of these inexhaustible springs of motive of which science has taught us and makes them, sublimated by personal loyalty to himself, the motivation for the achievement of the best of personal and social life. Thus he creates power at life's center and continues and fulfils the ultimate process that was implicit when God said, "Let us make man in our image." The Son is as creative as the Father. The final fact about Christianity is the redemptive power of Christ to create out of the broken, disunited fragment of our sinful nature "a new man in Christ Jesus." Old things must pass away. All things must become new through him. He is God dealing with our souls directly, though mediatorily. He is God's will and love in action, and he moves upon me so as to remake me and give me a new life, an eternal life. In mediating God to my soul Christ becomes God within my soul. Having Christ I have God. And this is Christianity's secret mystery and humanity's redemptive destiny, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The identification of Jesus with God reaches its highest manifestation in the realm of *goodness*. Here the analogy is so complete as to be all-embracing, and so evident as to need little argument. The goodness of God is a doctrine maintained with some difficulty if Jesus is left out of the picture, but once we interpret God in terms of Christ then the light

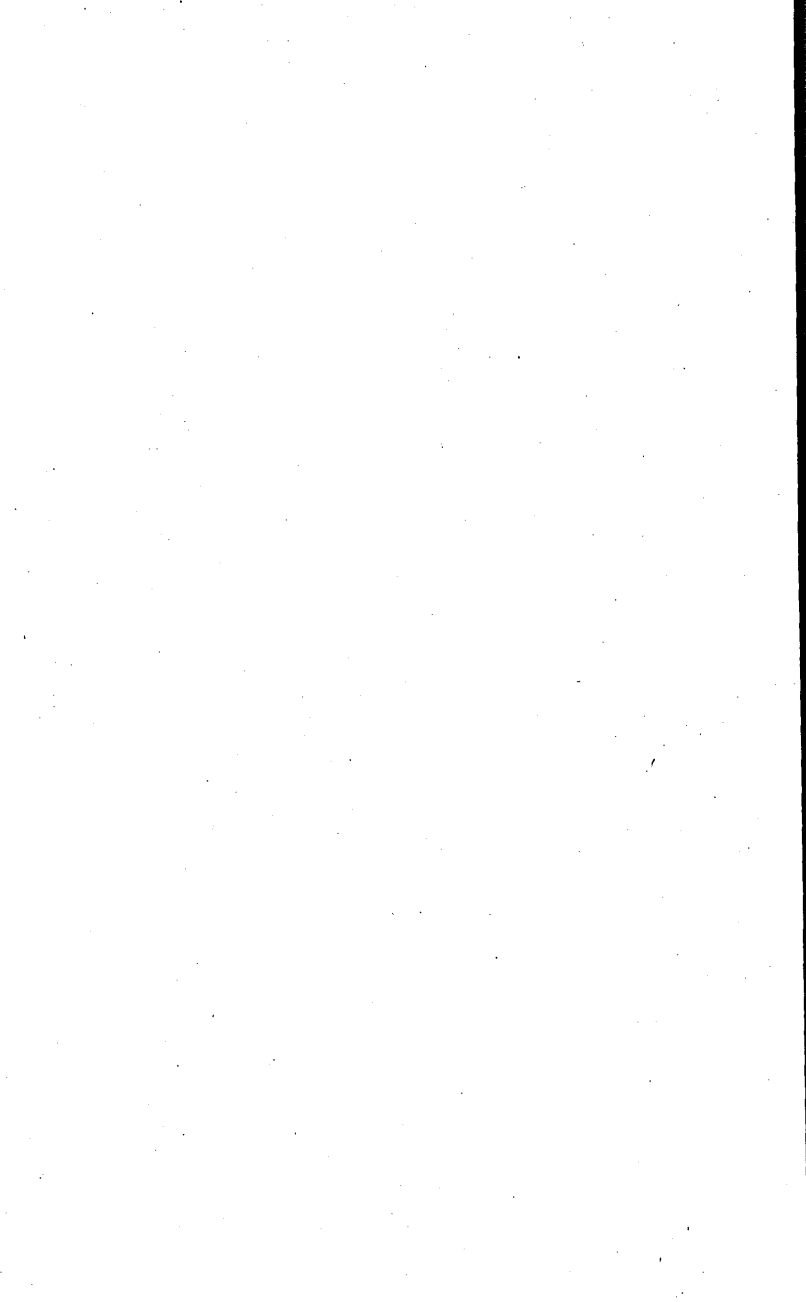
that shines from his face lights up our understanding of the Father's nature. It was to reveal the nature of God as infinite goodness that Jesus lived and died, and for millions of men so complete is that revelation that for them Jesus is God and they put him at that place in their moral life and personal devotion which belongs to the Deity. They cannot conceive the Infinite but they can recognize Jesus. They cannot approach God as Spirit but they can love their Master. They cannot comprehend Infinite Love but they can follow him who was Love Incarnate. When I seek for that which in any realm will satisfy my sense of the fullest truth about God, I find myself coming to Jesus. When I gaze upon him on the cross and remember what lies behind that experience and dimly comprehend the triumph of love unbounded on that day given to the world, I must fall with the worshiping hosts of all the centuries and all the lands and cry, "My Lord and my God."

In those closing words I press again the central question: Is Jesus divine? We want no illusion and can accept no evasion. We cannot build the good life on a fable. We cannot go on preaching if we are nervous about the central fact of our faith. Each man must answer for himself, in the light of his background, his need, and his knowledge. To me the conclusion is inescapable. Jesus so convincingly

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answers to every idea of God which my mind can conceive and so completely satisfies every need that my heart can experience that for me he is God manifest in the flesh. I can conceive of God in no higher terms than Jesus, and I can think of nothing that my finite being might desire in its outreach after the Eternal God that is not now immediately and gloriously available in Jesus, my Lord. The ancient searcher, standing in the dawning light of revelation, cried, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" The modern believer, standing in the full splendor of God's eternal revelation in Christ, may cry aloud to all men: "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

"Since so it is, and in that Face for me
The final beauty burns to birth,
And all things in heaven and earth
Are summed and centered in a loveliness
Beyond compare. How can my soul
But worship Him as Savior and as God?"



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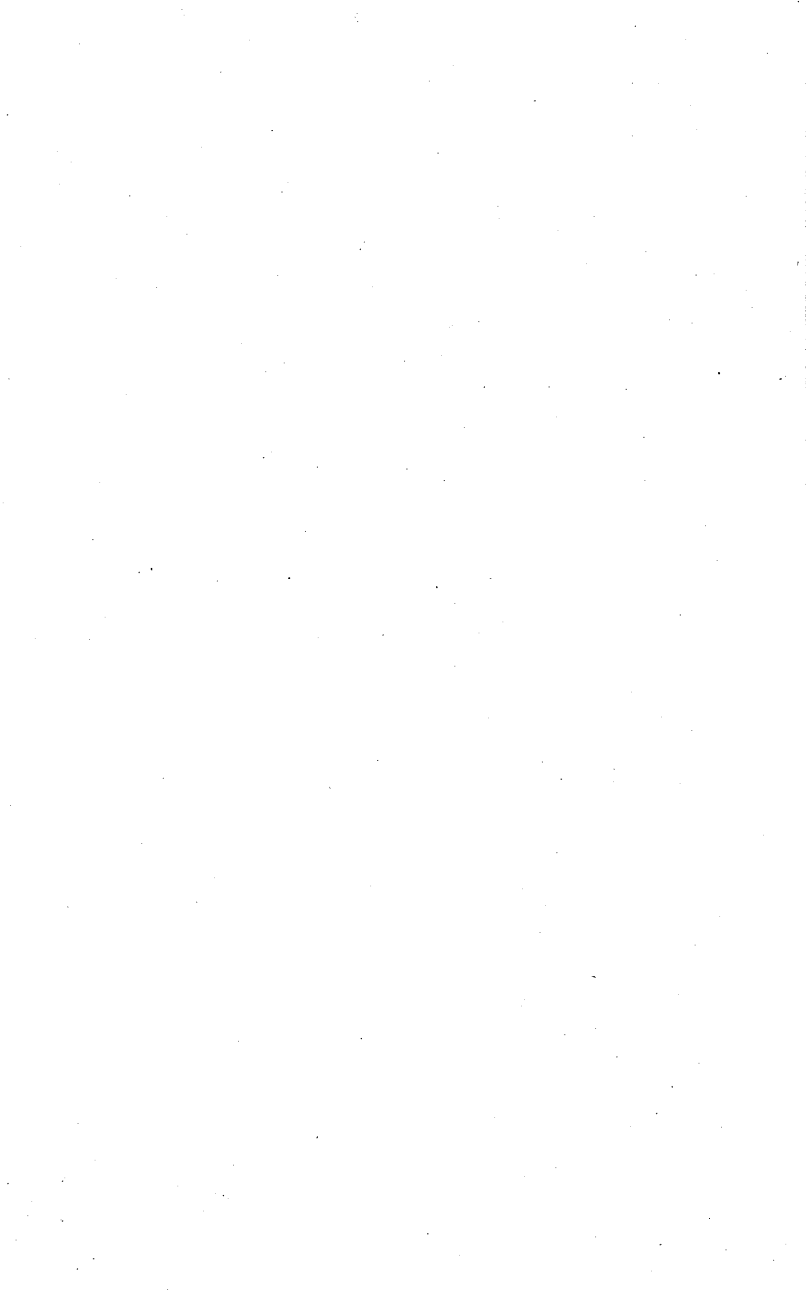
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THE BASIC BELIEFS OF JESUS was composed on the Linotype in eleven point Garamond, leaded two points. Little is known of Claud Garamond, the individual, except the fact that he was conceded by his contemporaries to be the most famous type designer of his time (1541). Garamond has vivified his type by introducing a decided contrast in the main and minor lines, and freedom in curves. The long ascenders and descenders not only enhance the beauty and gracefulness of the letters, but make reading easy and prevent the frequent error of crowding the lines.

The body of the book is printed on seventy-pound West Virginia Hibulk, and case is of Western's Parchment Vellum stamped in gold Brighten Leaf. End sheets are Patten Rag Text.

DESIGNED BY

A. E. DISTELHURST

SET UP, PRINTED, AND BOUND BY

THE PARTHENON PRESS,
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



BS
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The basic beliefs of

Jesus.

FEB 13 '48

DEC 8 '42

DEC 11 '42

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